



JOURNAL

March–April 2008 | Volume 36, Number 2

Sesquicentennial

1958





1958 Sesquicentennial Parade
Carol W. Martin/GHM Collection



Director's Corner

by Fred Goss

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This spring brings a time of change at the museum. The new museum-based Historic Preservation Review Committee has undertaken its charge to document and review the proposed building renovations as they progress this spring. You'll read more about this committee and their accomplishments in upcoming Journals.

The Greensboro Historical Museum, Inc. Board of Trustees is looking forward to an eventful year. The initial steps of a strategic plan are being initiated with the aid of a facilitator from the City of Greensboro's Organizational Development Department. One of the board's primary areas for 2008 is the development of membership and expanding its reach to a greater portion of the Greensboro community. You are aware of the great benefit that you provide to the community as members of the museum. Your support is crucial in providing experiences for tens of thousands of visitors that enter the doors at 130 Summit Avenue, and access the museum through the Internet and the Traveling Trunk programs. We want to have others share in this support of the museum.

I can't write an article this calendar year that does not mention our city's bicentennial. April gives you an excellent opportunity to see Greensboro's history through the creative talent of Brenda Schleunes and The Touring Theater of North Carolina. Ms. Schleunes will offer a history of Greensboro based on the intellectual content of the new exhibit on the stage of Mary Norris Preyer hall this April. Make sure not to miss this unique production.



1908 Centennial Parade

A Building Collaboration

by Jon B. Zachman
Curator of Collections

During the citywide bicentennial celebration, two major building preservation projects will commence at the museum: the repair, replacement and maintenance of the historic slate roof and the repair of the historic wooden windows. These projects are part of the \$5.3 million museum bond that city residents approved in November 2006.

Before any work begins, museum and city staff approached local architects and preservation professionals to serve on a Historic Preservation Review Committee that will assist in addressing the immediate and long-term preservation needs of the National Register property. Members of the committee include Benjamin Briggs, Mike Cowhig, Mark Ethun, Stefan-leih Geary, Fred Goss, Jo Leimenstoll, John Linn, Ricky Pyrtle, Fred Ridge, Jerome Williams and myself.

At its first meeting, the committee urged the museum to prepare a Historic Structures Report — a document recommended by the National Park Service that serves as a guide when considering the appropriate treatment to a historic property. Emphasizing the importance of this document, committee member Benjamin Briggs, executive director of Preservation Greensboro Inc., explained that the report “answers questions such as the original color palette, methods for repairing your plaster walls, and can include solutions to questions about energy efficiency. More than giving guidance on how to maintain your building, it will work towards a logical and careful strategy for the long-term care of the building.”

A typical Historic Structures Report contains eight major components: a history of the building(s), construction history, architectural evaluation, analy-

sis of existing conditions, maintenance requirements, archaeology, proposed work, and drawings & photographs. Each report is site specific and varies based on the size and complexity of the property. Since the museum occupies a multi-structure property that originally housed the First Presbyterian Church (1892-1928), and later the Richardson Memorial Civic Center (1939-1964), and finally the Greensboro Historical Museum (1964 to the present), this report could be somewhat lengthy.

Committee members devised a three-prong strategy for completing the report: utilizing knowledge and exper-

conservation course this semester. According to Jo, “this project is a terrific chance to work with community partners and it provides the preservation students a wonderful opportunity to hone their archival research and architectural investigation skills as they piece together the evolution of this historically significant and architecturally complex building.” Student Jenny Blakemore feels that “one of the most important aspects of this project is that it takes us out of the classroom and into the real world of historic preservation.”

By the end of the semester, the students will complete several components of the Historic Structures Report: an expanded history of the building and its occupants, a history of the construction, and documentation of current conditions. During their archival research, students will identify and digitize the historic images and plans which are currently housed at the museum and First Presbyterian Church. As part of the documentation of the current conditions, students will photograph the building exterior using a digital camera and Elcovision software, which has the ability to produce scaled elevations of the building facades.



Professor Jo Leimenstoll and her students Joy Williams, Jenny Blakemore, Katie Nash, Meghan Kirkland and Karla Rosenberg

tise within the museum, city and local preservation committee; contracting with a preservation specialist to conduct physical analysis and make recommendations for future approaches; and working with historic preservation students at UNCG. Jo Leimenstoll, professor in the Department of Interior Architecture, volunteered to make this project the focus of her architectural



Collections Unveiled

Cadillac: One of the World's Finest-Made Vehicles

*by Jon B. Zachman,
Curator of Collections*

During the mid to late 1960s, the museum's Hall of Transportation expanded to feature several icon pieces: a c.1810 Road Wagon, a 1906 Cadillac, a 1906 REO (named for Ransom E. Olds—the predecessor to the Oldsmobile), a 1916 Model T Ford Touring Car, and a 1926 Model T Ford Sedan—all of which have been displayed for the past four decades. Of this group the museum first acquired the Cadillac, collected in memory of Dr. J. Pinckney Turner in 1961. Dr. Turner was among the city's first residents to own an automobile. Other early automobile owners included William C. Boren, Paul C. Lindley Sr., John M. Rosenblatt, Lindsay H. Hopkins, Dr. William P. Beall, and Dr. John T. J. Battle.

Not just in Greensboro but across the country, the first decade of the 20th century was an exciting time in automotive history. In 1902 the Detroit Automobile Company became the Cadillac Automobile Company following Henry Ford's departure to create his own company. A few years later, the company reorganized as the Cadillac Motor Car Company and its production increased to nearly fifty vehicles day. By 1906 Cadillac offered American consumers a choice of four models: two single-cylinder vehicles (Model M and Model K) and two four-cylinder vehicles (Model H and Model L). A period publication boasted, "the single cylinder Cadillac is the most moderately priced strictly high grade motor car in the world." It also described this vehicle as an "all-around family and business car

for the man who wants a motor vehicle, which any member of the family can operate...and a car which is capable of going any place at any time."

The museum's single-cylinder Cadillac shares many characteristics of the early Cadillacs, including wheel steering (on the right side) and tufted upholstery. Since the museum first exhibited the Cadillac, it has been interpreted as a 1906 Roadster Model which originally sold for \$750. During some recent research I learned that the vehicle's serial and engine numbers (Serial No. 9259 and Engine No. 25706) are not consistent with the 1906 date. In fact, production records

from the early years of the Cadillac Motor Car Co. (housed at the General Motors Heritage Center) confirm that the museum's car is a 1908 Model S Cadillac with a two passenger rumble seat which originally sold for \$935.

During the 2008 Bicentennial Celebration, the museum will feature the 1908 Cadillac in a new display in the lobby of the Lindsay building. Please visit the museum this spring to see this 100 year-old automobile and another display called "Greensboro Celebrates Its Founding," which will include photographs and memorabilia from the 1908, 1958 and 2008 celebrations.



Cadillac arriving in 1961

Passport to History

“to fix on a suitable and central place in the County of Guilford”

by Linda Evans
Curator of Community History

For years it was known as Jefferson Square, and before that, Courthouse Square. In 1808, it was the starting point from which surveyor Nathan Mendenhall laid out North, South, East and West streets. The intersection of today's Elm and Market streets, known today for a striking skyscraper and a time/temperature sign, marks the historic center of our city.

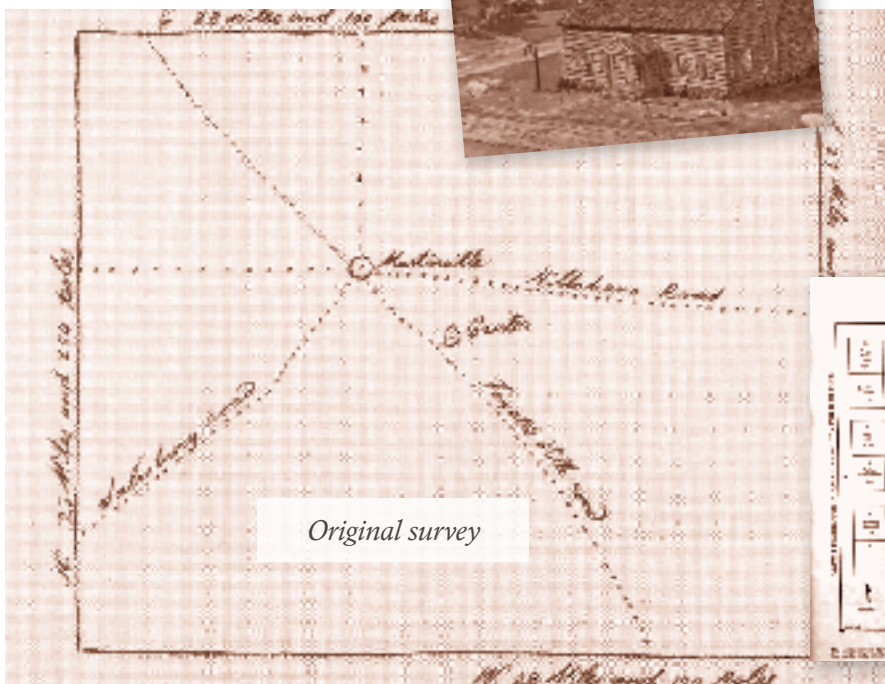
How it all began? Politics, of course. Once county boundaries changed to create Rockingham and Randolph, a group of landowners lobbied to move the county seat to the center of Guilford. Travel time to the courthouse to register deeds, pay taxes, and conduct government business should be the same for all, they argued. Those wanting to keep Martinville as the county seat lost an 1807 referendum, and in December

the North Carolina General Assembly decreed “That William Armfield, Esq., Doctor David Caldwell, jun., Charles Bruce, Hugh Forbes, Nathan Mendenhall, Jacob Clapp, and George Swaine, be appointed commissioners to contract with workmen for building a court-house, prison and stocks, on such convenient spot, contiguous to, or at the center of said county, as they, or a majority of them, shall think most suitable; and for defraying the expence of such buildings.”

Their work began with a challenge, for Nathan Mendenhall's surveying tools led him to a spot low in elevation and high in moisture. Some called the land a swamp, others a duck pond (today we call it Fisher Park). Not about to give up, Mendenhall found a

favorable knoll, slightly south, 836 feet above sea level. Ralph Gorrell agreed to sell 42 acres of land surrounding the knoll, for the sum of \$98. Gorrell, who had arrived about 1750 seeking his fortune, owned land on both sides of South Buffalo Creek. An influential politician, he had served in the House of Commons and at the Halifax Convention. Now he was an elder statesman, described as a distinguished gentleman who favored knee breeches, silver buckles and a gold-handled cane. Gorrell signed the land transaction that made Greensboro possible on March 25, 1808. Not long afterwards an auction raised \$1,689.39 from the sale of 49 square lots, at prices ranging from \$4.80 to \$151, money that would fund new county buildings.

In December of 1808, the General Assembly passed another important piece of legislation, giving Guilford's county seat a name – Greensborough, honoring General Nathanael Greene, American commander at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. The new town's boundaries stretched one-quarter mile from the epicenter (today that would mean east to Davie, west to Greene, north to Belle Meade, and south to February One Place). As Greensboro marks its 200th year, it has grown from a small town on paper, with no buildings and no residents, to a metropolitan city encompassing over 123 square miles, a place that more than 244,000 people call home.



Picturing GREENSBORO

Four Decades of
African American Community



OTIS L. HAIRSTON JR.

shop
stop

by Dawn Kouba
Museum Shop Manager

Picturing Greensboro: Four Decades of African American Community is native son Otis Hairston's most recently published volume of photographs. Hairston's lens has captured every conceivable activity from community relations to sporting events to political campaigns. Since 1971 he and his camera have recorded speeches, athletic contests, graduations, even very public marriage proposals. His book presents everyday citizens and celebrities, poets, educators, spiritual leaders – an endless procession of people who have been actively committed to changing and improving life in a growing Southern town. **Picturing Greensboro** is a catalog of experiences that pays tribute to the accomplishments of the African American men and women who have contributed to that growth. The book is now available for \$19.99 in the museum gift shop.

Lasting Impressions

ORIGINAL PLAY FOCUSES ON THE CITY'S UNKNOWN PAST

By Taneka Bennett
Director of Marketing
and Development

The city of Greensboro has a fascinating story, one that is worthy of taking center stage at the finest of theatres. Therefore, in celebration of the city's bicentennial, the museum has commissioned Brenda Schleunes of the Touring Theatre of North Carolina to write an original play compiled from archival materials. The thought-provoking production, *Lasting Impressions*, will give insight into some of the city's history that is not widely known. "This is a never-before-seen production, and we're inviting everyone to come see the play to discover Greensboro's history," says director Fred Goss. The play is debuting at the museum on April 18 and running through April 27.

Based on actual quotes from newspapers, personal journals, recordings, and interviews, the play resonates with the voices and opinions of those from before Greensboro's founding to the present day. Theatergoers will hear the colorful comments of Anne Royall, called America's first woman journalist, who visited Greensboro in 1830; feel the emotional struggles Josephine Boyd endured as the first black student to attend Grimsley High School in the 1950s; laugh at the humorous perspective of Louise Wigfall, who worried about beaus and pretty shoes during wartime; and enter the life of James Evans, who came to a crossroads at age eighteen and took the road to a textile mill. Additional voices from more than thirty individuals will further accentuate Greensboro's distinctive story.

"I didn't realize Greensboro's history was so interesting until I read the script," comments actor Donna Bradby. "I commend Brenda for accepting the challenge to adapt more than two hundred years of history into an eighty-minute play."

If you ask Schleunes what it was like writing the script, she'll tell you it wasn't an easy task, but it was truly a journey she enjoyed.

"It was a daunting task trying to determine what was going into the storyline. Everyone owns a piece of Greensboro history and everyone has a different impression regarding the city," says Schleunes.

Although Schleunes realizes she can't write about every single event that took place in Greensboro's history, she is hoping that the stories she chose to highlight, those impressions created by generations, will leave a lasting impression on all who attend the show.

Research and funding for the play is made possible through the John Floy Wicker Endowment and a grant from the Greensboro Bicentennial Commission.



Josephine Boyd
at Grimsley
High School

©Greensboro
News & Record

Event Calendar

In Memorium

March

EVOLUTION OF A CITY:

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Sunday, March 16 at 2:30 p.m.

Benjamin Briggs, Executive Director of Preservation Greensboro, Inc.

Gayle Fripp, Guilford County Historian

FREE

GUILD PROGRAM

Monday, March 17

Social at 10 a.m.—Program at 10:30 a.m.

Dr. Clifford Watkins

“Showman: The Life and Music of Perry George Lowery”

FREE

GREENSBORO’S LITERACY LEGACY:

REMEMBERING JAMES EPHRAIM MC-

GIRT, GEORGE MOSES HORTON, AND

RANDALL JARRELL

Sunday, March 30 at 2:30 p.m.

Central Library

FREE

April

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD:

FREEDOM ROUTES FOR

ENSLAVED AFRICANS

Cosponsored with Guilford College

Thursday, April 3 at 7 p.m.

Central Library

Fergus Bordewich, author of *Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America*

FREE

CIVILITIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS—

WHAT LESSONS LEARNED?

Thursday, April 10 at 7 p.m.

Central Library

Dr. William Chafe, Duke University
Q&A moderated by Dr.

Claude Barnes, NC A&T

FREE

PASSAGE TO GREENSBORO: PROFILES

OF OUR IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Thursday, April 17 at 7 p.m.

Central Library

Dr. Raleigh Bailey, UNCG, Nolo

Martinez, Center for New North

Carolinians, and a community panel

FREE

April

LASTING IMPRESSIONS:

A TOURING THEATRE OF NORTH

CAROLINA PRODUCTION

April 17-19 & 24-26 at 7 p.m.

April 19-20 & 26-27 at 3 p.m.

All Tickets \$5

GUILD PROGRAM

Monday, April 21

Social at 10 a.m.—Program at 10:30 a.m.

Charles Cranfield, Superintendent

Guilford Courthouse National Military Park

FREE



HOW THE IRON HORSE

TRANSFORMED GREENSBORO

Thursday, April 24 at 7 p.m.

Central Library

Author Jim Wrinn

Response by Dr. Allen Trelease and

Jim Patton

FREE

BELLE MEADE SOCIETY SPRING

MEETING

Monday, April 28 at 6 p.m.

Former museum director Bill Moore discusses his home's feature on HGTV's *If Walls Could Talk*

May

GREENSBORO HISTORICAL MUSEUM/

BLANDWOOD TRIP TO THE BILTMORE

ESTATE

Tuesday, May 6

Enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour & lunch at the Deer Park Restaurant

Reservations requested by April 1

Cost \$155 per person

Call Preservation Greensboro at 272-5003

GUILD PROGRAM

Monday, May 19 at 10:30 a.m.

Gary Brown, Location: David Caldwell Historic Park Interpretive Center

FREE

MRS. ALICE ABEL

gift from

Mr. & Mrs. William J. Moore

DR. LAURENCE ALSPAUGH

gift from

Mrs. Hilda Prefontaine

MALCOLM AVERY MILLER

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Mrs. Merle C. Frazier

MRS. ALICE RADCLIFFE

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Mr. & Mrs. William J. Moore

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Dr. & Mrs. T.E. Sikes, Jr.

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Mr. & Mrs. Tom May

Mr. & Mrs. William J. Moore

Mr. & Mrs. Roy Phipps

Mrs. Hilda Prefontaine

Dr. & Mrs. T.E. Sikes, Jr.

O. Henry Woman's Club

MRS. CAROLYN STEVENS

gift from

Mrs. Hilda Prefontaine

Last month's Shop Stop article on *Mid Life-Mid Century-Mid South* described Mrs. Virginia Zenke as a Charleston native, but in fact, Mrs. Zenke was born in Norfolk and raised in South Carolina. We apologize for the error.

1908 Centennial Parade



Coming in April

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Bicentennial Premiere

2008 John Floy Wicker Event

PERFORMANCES

April 18, 19, 24, 25, 26 at 8 p.m.

April 19, 20, 26, and 27 at 3 p.m.

Tickets \$5

Call (336) 373-2043 for tickets

• *Performed by Touring Theatre
of North Carolina*

• *Compiled by Brenda Schleunes*

• *Musical compositions
by Wayne Seymour and lyrics
by Brenda Schleunes*

• *Commissioned by the Greensboro
Historical Museum, Incorporated*



130 Summit Avenue
Greensboro, N.C. 27401
www.greensborohistory.org
336-373-2043

JOURNAL

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Museum Hours

Tuesday — Saturday 10 – 5
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