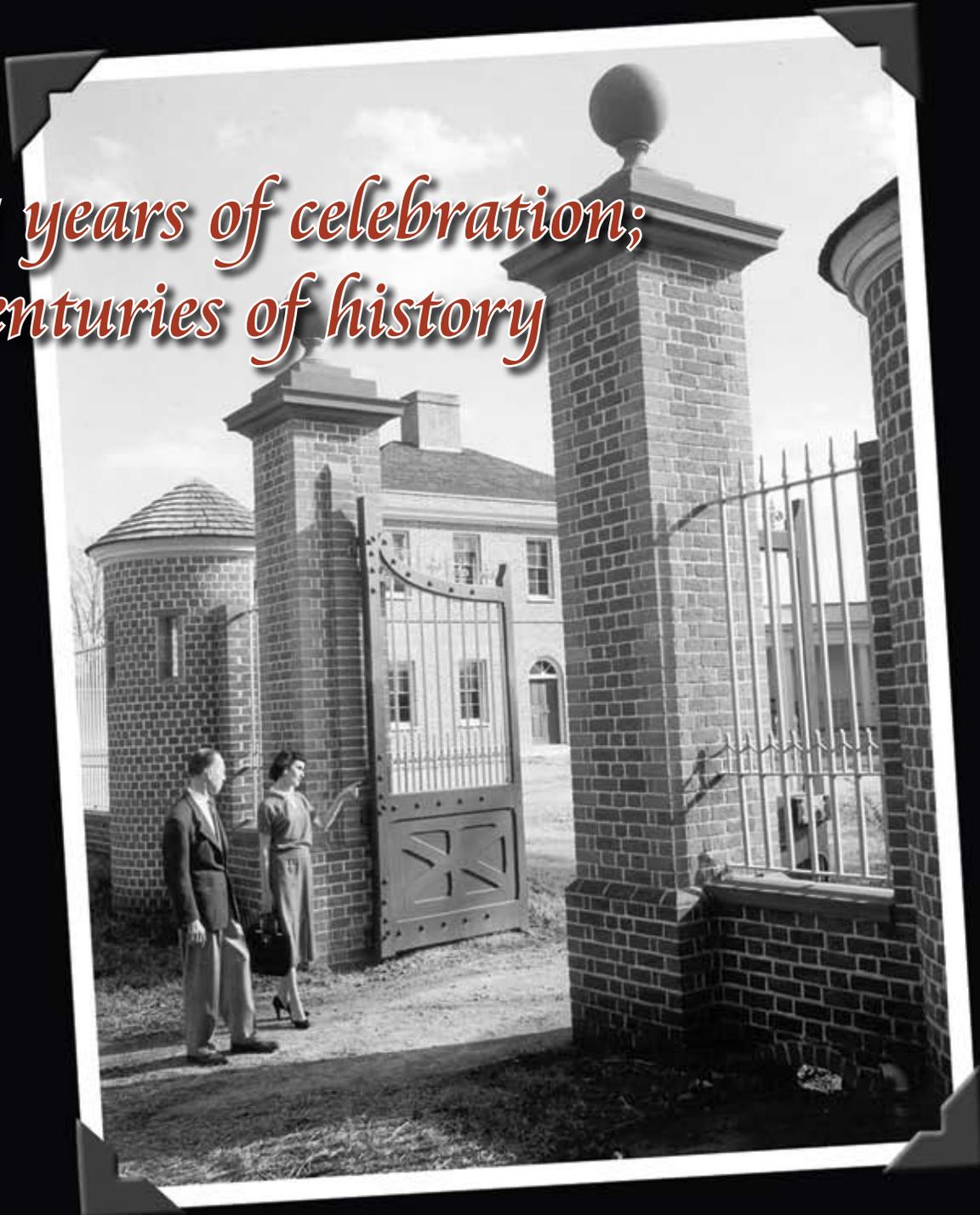


Winter 2009

The Palace

TRYON PALACE HISTORIC SITES & GARDENS

*Fifty years of celebration;
centuries of history*



New Staff



Rebecca Reimer joined the staff of Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens in September as Curator of Interpretation.

Rebecca's educational and professional experiences draw from a variety of backgrounds, which will be well utilized in her new position. As an undergraduate at Connecticut College in New London, Connecticut, she majored in American history and worked as a tour coordinator for the local historical society. The introduction to local maritime and nineteenth-century history prompted her senior research project, which studied the role of women in New England's prosperous whaling industry.

After graduation, Rebecca served as an educator specialist for Mystic Seaport

Museum, Inc. She worked developing and implementing educational tours and programs until 2006, when she left to pursue a graduate degree. Rebecca completed her master's degree in February 2008 at the University of Bristol in Bristol, England, where she studied historical archaeology. She participated in excavations in Virginia as part of her course of study, using her experiences in her dissertation in order to examine the archaeology of slavery in the American South.

Joining the staff of Tryon Palace in September, Rebecca is quickly becoming involved in its fast-paced schedule. While working to develop new educational programs for the near future, she is also taking part in the annual Christmas program and will be coordinating Tryon Palace's participation in both New Bern's 300th anniversary celebration and the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. "I'm extremely excited to be involved with Tryon Palace," Rebecca says. "There are so many fascinating projects – both at present and in the future – and such a wealth of historical resources. I'm delighted to be a part of it."

On the Cover – This Edition

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the restoration of Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens, we will be including antique photographs from the early work at the site, and images of the Palace and gardens as they appeared when the gates re-opened in 1959 at North Carolina's first capitol.

This issue's cover depicts Grace and Gregor Norman-Wilcox at the inner gate of the Palace grounds in 1959. Gregor was hired as the consulting curator to develop the furnishing plan for the Palace. He was Curator of Decorative Arts at the Los Angeles County Museum in California, and an expert in both American and English decorative arts. His wife, Grace, was a ceramic specialist who helped to identify and catalogue some of the fragments uncovered in the excavation at the Palace site.



Marble tile, based on the original floor uncovered during excavations, is laid during the restoration of Tryon Palace in 1958-1959.

Clarification: In the Fall issue, Christine de Graffenried was listed as a descendant of New Bern's founder, Baron Christoph de Graffenried. Christine is actually a member of the von Graffenried line of the family and a collateral rather than direct descendant of the Baron.

The Palace

*A Publication of the Tryon Palace
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VOLUME 9 NUMBER 2 WINTER 2009

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The Palace is published four times a year by the Tryon Palace Council of Friends to provide information about and build support for Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Send correspondence to Tiffany Yecke Brooks, Editor, Editor, *The Palace*, P.O. Box 1007, New Bern, NC 28563. E-mail: tbrooks@tryonpalace.org. Fax: 252-514-4876.

For more information about Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens, click on our website at www.tryonpalace.org or call 252-514-4900, 800-767-1560.

Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens is a part of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary. www.ncculture.com.



The Incomplete Story of John Hawks

By Tiffany Yecke Brooks, Editor

In contrast to the rich details we have on the life of William Tryon and his family, the details about John Hawks, the architect who designed Tryon Palace, are scant. There are gaping holes in what we can confirm about his life, which present a challenge in understanding more about the man and his career.

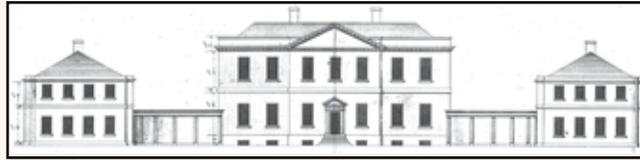
We know that John Hawks was born circa 1734 in Shipston-on-Stour, a small town about ten miles south of Stratford-upon-Avon, and that his parents were of the artisan class. His father, Francis Hawks, was a joiner; we know little more than the name of his mother, Elizabeth. There are no known records of young John's early life, including any contractual evidence of his apprenticeship. It is very possible, since joiners were skilled woodworkers who produced much of the detail work and joint-pieces in carpentry, that John learned the finer points of craftsmanship and building from his father.¹

Just how John Hawks came to be involved in architecture is unclear. As he was not the oldest son in the Hawks family, he was not situated to inherit his father's shop; thus, it may have been that the construction boom of the mid-18th century presented the most promising career option in design and building. In the early 1760s, Hawks' name appears in the pay records of Stiff Leadbetter, a master builder whose Palladian style was in great demand at that time for English country houses. If he was not already proficient in architectural technique, Hawks would have certainly become so after working under the master builder's supervision.

By 1765, however, Hawks had left Leadbetter's employ and emigrated to North Carolina at the request of William Tryon, who was poised to assume the reigns of government from Arthur Dobbs. Why Hawks quit Leadbetter's busy workshop and how he became acquainted with Tryon remain a mystery. Despite an earlier belief that Hawks accompanied Tryon to the New World in 1764, there is no evidence that the two men traveled together or that Hawks even arrived prior to Dobbs' death in March of 1765.²

It is clear, though, that Hawks' coming was for a specific purpose, as it was one of Tryon's charges to establish a permanent seat of colonial government in North Carolina. With this vision in place, Tryon and Hawks together sought to design an edifice that would meet such a purpose with dignity and esteem, while simultaneously speaking to the power of the British crown in the colony.

The first extant drawings Hawks created of the Palace are dated December 29, 1766, and feature a design in the Palladian mode, in keeping with Hawks' training and experience in England. Tryon must have approved of the look of the structure,



as its façade never changed throughout the subsequent drafts of the building plans; however, the dimensions and internal design went through a series of adjustments until they were

well-suited to function both as a living space as well to host a meeting of the Assembly.³ Together, the governor and architect developed and adapted the plans until they were both practical and aesthetically appealing, intimate and yet imposing.⁴

Despite being listed as one of the major grievances in the War of Regulation (1762-1771), which pitted poorer colonists in some of North Carolina's western counties against the colonial government and its taxes, construction on the Palace went forward.⁵ Less than two years after the building was finished, however, Governor Tryon left to assume control of New York's government and Hawks, who followed him northward for a brief stay, eventually decided to return New Bern – a move that made Hawks the first major English architect to remain in the colonies once his commission was complete.

While it is clear that he was a prominent citizen in the city for the remainder of his life, the specifics of Hawks' activities are somewhat nebulous. He was almost certainly involved in the design of several churches, courthouses, and jails in Craven County and beyond; and he possibly had a role in the construction of the Stanly, Coor-Bishop, Coor-Gaston houses, and Bellair estate in the New Bern vicinity. There are records that link him to political involvement in the area, as well. Even here, though, there remains something of a mystery: During the 1780s, Hawks worked on a committee that handled the petitions, pay, and benefit applications for members of North Carolina's Continental Line.⁶ How is it that a man whose professional allegiances were clearly in line with the Crown in the mid-1770s rose to a position of responsibility with the Colonial army?

We may never be able to determine the exact facts about many of Hawks' key decisions, pursuits, and motivations. Further complicating the matter is that as we expand our knowledge of him, we find that information previously believed to be historical is often not quite accurate. Thus, the mystery persists, changing and adapting but never quite resolving, as we continue to learn about this gifted and intriguing character whose life and work are so central to the Palace itself. 

¹ Bishir, C.W. and Sandbeck, P.B. "John Hawks." Unpublished manuscript.

² *Ibid.*

³ Dill, Alonzo Thomas. "Tryon's Palace: A Neglected Niche of North Carolina History." *The North Carolina Historical Review*. XIX (April, 1992): 119-67. pg.126-127

⁴ It is from these plans, which survived in the British Public Records Office, that the 1959 restoration of the Palace was based.

⁵ Kimball, Fiske, and Gertrude Carraway. "Tryon's Palace." *The New-York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin*. XXIV (January, 1940):13-22. pg.17.

⁶ Powell, William S., ed. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography: Volume 3, H-K*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979. pg. 78.



Colonial Revival: Pursuing “Good Taste”

By *Tiffany Yecke Brooks, Editor and Nancy Richards, Curator of Collections*

One of the most popular attractions at the 1876 World’s Fair in Philadelphia was an unlikely contender. Most of the fair was dedicated to highlighting industrial and technological advancements – Alexander Graham Bell’s telephone and the first typewriter both had their public debuts at the event. In stark contrast to these devices of the future, however, was a colonial kitchen exhibit outfitted with costumed re-enactors who worked a spinning wheel and demonstrated historical domestic arts.

This simple scene, created in honor of America’s centennial, helped to usher in the Colonial Revival movement. A celebration of early American design and decoration, Colonial Revival was a dominant architectural and decorative design motif from the late 19th century through the middle part of the 20th century. It reconciled modern techniques in building and manufacturing with a pervasive nostalgia for a simpler, nobler (and often imagined) way of life.

Spurred on first by the patriotism of the centennial celebration, a number of converging factors may have bolstered and perpetuated the style’s prominence into the 20th century. It is possible that as the number of foreign immigrants grew, colonial decorating was a way to promote one’s own “Americanness.” Many experts have pointed to the 200th anniversary of George Washington’s birthday in 1932 as a factor in colonial nostalgia, as well. Design scholar Sarah E. Mitchell adds another possible motivation, writing: “In a world that was facing wars around the globe, people may have wanted to emphasize their uniquely American heritage, rather than borrowing so much from European models.”¹

Whatever the various causes, the effect was similar: a drive to restore the antique and to re-create a modern scene of the colonial picturesque. This was seen in the renewed interest in preserving historic properties that took root in towns across America. Often led by women’s groups, such as Daughters of the American Revolution (itself formed in the 1890s as part of the renewed interest in America’s early history), these efforts sought to honor the past by revitalizing period buildings, many of which had fallen into disrepair in favor of the general push to celebrate the country’s emerging modernism.

Colonial Revivalism also had an effect on interior decoration, where heirlooms pieces were refinished and given special

prominence, and early Americana was highly sought-after. When authentic pieces weren’t available, high quality replicas filled their place. Furniture companies sought to replicate both general styles and specific pieces for manufacture.

Massachusetts furniture maker Wallace Nutting famously photographed and catalogued pieces from important historical homes and collections in his popular series of books published from the early 1900s to the 1940s. He also made casts of a number of original furnishings that he then used to create replicas for sale. The Potthast brothers, German craftsmen who settled in Baltimore, sought to recapture the craftsmanship and elegant simplicity of Old America in their furniture, which they sold under the copyrighted phrase: “The True Antiques of Tomorrow.”²

Volumes of books celebrating early American design were published, as well, with titles that indicate the mixture of pride and nostalgia that steered the Colonial Revival movement: *The Furniture of Our Forefathers* (Esther Singleton, 1900); *Reclaiming the Old House* (Charles Edward Hooper,

1913); *The Homes of Our Ancestors* (Doubleday, Page and Co., publishers, 1925). One of the earliest books in the Colonial Revival vein was *The Decoration of Houses* (1898), by novelist Edith Wharton. In this text, Wharton praised the simplicity and elegance of earlier American style – ideals she felt had been crowded out by the Victorian penchant for extravagance. This text influenced Elsie deWolfe, an early interior designer, and whose 1913 book, *The House in Good Taste*, was considered an essential read for any well-versed decorator.

The concept of “good taste” was an important one in the Colonial Revival movement. In their examination of upper-class interiors, *Stately Homes in America* (1903), authors Harry Desmond and Herbert Croly praise the colonial style, writing that “the excellence of the colonial dwellings depended on their decorous and unobtrusive character” and thus deemed it, “one of the best sources from which to derive the forms of a modest and inexpensive modern dwelling, for its designs are simple, its materials cheap, and the character of its expression adapted to the houses of quiet people of good taste.” In fact, the authors employ the word “taste” no less than 24 times in their text.³

Yet despite the movement’s praise of the humility and simplicity of the colonial style, its realization was often excessive, with lush oriental carpets spread under spinning



“Lady at the Spinning Wheel” (1885), pastel

continued on page 8



The 41st Annual Tryon Palace Decorative Arts Symposium

Friday, March 20 – Sunday, March 22, 2009



In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the restoration of the Palace, the 41st Decorative Arts Symposium topic is “Recreating the Past We Wanted: New Visions of Old America.”

This exploration of the Colonial Revival movement will examine the manner in which late 19th and early 20th century designers drew from the country’s colonial past to create what was termed, “the antiques of the future.” Topics and speakers for this program will include:

Creating the American Past: Colonial Revival Architecture, Past, Present, Future

Richard Guy Wilson, Commonwealth Professor Architectural History, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Inventing Antiques: The American Antiques Market and the Construction of a National Heritage

Briann G. Greenfield, Associate Professor and Public History Program Coordinator, Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, Connecticut

A Lover of Old China: Edward Lamson Henry’s Historical Interiors

Amy Kurtz Lansing, Curator, Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme, Connecticut

Re-stocking the Colonial China Cupboard to Suit Modern Taste

Ellen Paul Denker, Museum Consultant and Independent Scholar, Burnsville, North Carolina

Following in the Footsteps of Paul Revere: Colonial Revival Silver

Gerald W. R. Ward, The Katherine Lane Weems Senior Curator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture, Art of the Americas, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts

The Colonial Revival Garden

Gordon Chappell, Director, Landscape Design, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia

Reverberation and Conjecture: The Borrowings Continue

Patrick Lee Lucas, Associate Professor, Department of Interior Architecture, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Greensboro, North Carolina

For registration information, please visit www.tryonpalace.org
Tel 800-767-1560 or 252-514-4933

About the image: In 1929, New Bern hosted a historic celebration and pageant in honor of North Carolina and American history. Local girls and young women were adorned as spirits of the rivers who proudly displayed emblems of the town’s colonial past, including the Spirit of America (center, portrayed by Mrs. W.B. Blades) and the ship that carried some of New Bern’s earliest settlers in 1710 (held by the third spirit from the right).

The event, which gained national attention, was an expression of Colonial Revival excitement and one of the early factors in generating public interest in restoring Tryon Palace.

The Decorative Arts Symposium is an important annual tradition at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens, bringing together scholars, collectors, students, and others to view aspects of the decorative arts and their social implications. Over the past four decades, its topics have spanned Tryon Palace and New Bern, to the place of decorative arts in North Carolina, Virginia, and the rest of the American South and Mid-Atlantic. Please make plans to join us for this exciting celebration of America and Americana.

For more information or to request a brochure, contact Karen O’Connell at 252-514-4933, or e-mail koconnell@tryonpalace.org. The Decorative Arts Symposium is co-sponsored by the Tryon Palace Commission and the Department of Architecture at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro.



The Tryon Palace Commission

Department of Interior Architecture and Department of History



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO

January

Winter Garden Hours

January 1-February 28, Gardens open until 5:00 p.m. Last ticket sold at 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, January 1

Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens is closed in honor of the New Year's holiday.

Tuesday, January 6

Council of Friends Historical Movie Series. Room at the Top

7:00 p.m. FREE. Visitor Center Auditorium

Thursday, January 15

African American Lecture

Guest Speaker: Bernie Siler, J.D.

"The Emancipation Proclamation"

7:00 p.m. FREE. Visitor Center Auditorium

February

Tuesday, February 3

Council of Friends Historical Movie Series. Some Like it Hot

7:00 p.m. FREE. Visitor Center Auditorium

Saturday, February 7

Bate Free Day: "Discovering Our Past, Celebrating Our Future"

9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. FREE. Sponsored by The Harold H. Bate Foundation.

Come enjoy all that Tryon Palace has to offer free of charge. Tour our lovely gardens and the first floors of our historic buildings. View colonial craft demonstrations and join in hands-on crafts, games, and activities for the whole family.

Thursday, February 12

Parlor Talk. Speaker: Tiffany Yecke Brooks, Ph.D. – The Palace Editor "The Cataract of Niagara; or The Huron Chief: Rediscovering New Bern's Own 'Indian Play'"

12:00 p.m. Admission: FREE – Bring your own lunch; beverages will be provided. Commission House Parlor *This talk will discuss the portrayal of Native Americans on the American stage in the early 19th century, and how these*

performances influence Jacksonian political policy. The discussion will then focus a recently-found "Indian Play" (as the genre was called) that was written in New Bern in 1827 and is currently held in the Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens archives.

Thursday, February 19

African American Lecture. Guest

Speaker: Antonia Parker, Storyteller "Mother Spirit: History Amelia Green"

7:00 p.m. FREE. Visitor Center Auditorium

March

Spring Garden Hours

March 1-May 31, Gardens open until 6:00 p.m. Last ticket sold at 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 3

Council of Friends Historical Movie Series. Beloved Infidel

7:00 p.m. FREE. Visitor Center Auditorium

Saturday, March 7

Tryon Palace Theater

Call 252-514-4900 for more information on specific performance schedule

11:00 a.m. Visitor Center Auditorium

Admission: \$4 adults, \$2 students

Come join us and experience the dramatic side of history. You may see an 18th century puppet show, a 19th century play, or another engaging historical vignette. Programs vary, so check often to learn about new ways we're bringing history to life! Tickets required.

Saturday, March 7

Scouting Out Tryon Palace: "How We Know What We Know"

9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. \$10 per student, \$12 per adult

Girl Scouts of all ages can enjoy a fun-filled day of history featuring tours of the Palace and three other historic homes, take-home projects, Colonial games, and hands-on activities that explore the various ways in which we can learn about the past. Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy this special Girl Scout Day at North Carolina's first capitol. Activities are designed for school-age girls; some activities have a minimum age requirement.

Space is limited and prepayment is required. Girl Scout leaders must register online at the Girl Scouts – North

Carolina Coastal Pines website (www.nccoastalpines.org) by February 23.

Saturday, March 14

Garden Lecture. Speaker: John O. Fussell III, author of A Birder's Guide to Coastal North Carolina

"Discovering Birds in the Garden"

10:00 a.m. FREE.

Visitor Center Auditorium. Sponsored by The Harold H. Bate Foundation.

Mr. Fussell will present an informative lecture on regional songbirds and birds along our rivers and wetlands, and will help you discover which plants in your garden can attract more birds.

Sunday, March 15

African American Historic Downtown Walking Tour

2:00 p.m. \$4 per adult, \$2 per student

Leaves from Visitor Center Lobby

Learn about 300 years of African American history on a walking tour of New Bern's historic district. This tour lasts approximately 90 minutes and covers 16 blocks.

Reservations required: 252-514-4935.

(Minimum Enrollment: 10)

Thursday, March 19

African American Lecture

Guest Speaker: Ms. Lillian L. Lambert "Breaking Down Barriers"

7:00 p.m. FREE. Visitor Center Auditorium

Saturday, March 21

Tryon Palace Theater

Call 252-514-4900 for more information on specific performance schedule

11:00 a.m. Visitor Center Auditorium

Come join us and experience the dramatic side of history. You may see an 18th century puppet show, a 19th century play, or another engaging historical vignette. Programs vary, so check often to learn about new ways we're bringing history to life! Tickets required.

Friday-Sunday, March 20-22

41st Annual Decorative Arts

Symposium. "Recreating the Past We Wanted: New Visions of Old America"

The keynote speaker is Richard Guy Wilson, Chair of the Architecture Department at The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA. To see the entire list of speakers and agenda go to www.tryonpalace.org or call 1-800-767-1560.

Saturday, March 21

50th Anniversary of Tryon Palace Exhibit. "Hats Off to the Dreamers: Rebuilding and Furnishing Tryon Palace"

Runs through March 2010. Admission included with purchase of Governor's Pass. Tryon Palace 2nd floor.

50th Anniversary Exhibit

In honor of the women who lead the way in resurrecting North Carolina's first capitol, Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens will feature an exhibit that chronicles their incredible work and vision with its 50th anniversary exhibit entitled, *Hats Off to the Dreamers: Rebuilding and Furnishing Tryon Palace*. This exhibit will be on display in the second floor of the Palace, and is scheduled to open in March, 2009.

Upcoming Events

2009 African American Lecture Series

Thursday, January 15: "The Emancipation Proclamation," presented by Bernie Siler, Attorney-at-Law

The Emancipation Proclamation consists of two executive orders from President Lincoln: The first declared the freedom of all slaves under Confederate occupancy; the second named the states in which it applied. Many citizens were unhappy with the proclamation, however, because it did not free slaves in the politically volatile border states. Others were concerned that the proclamation would not stand as a permanent end to slavery. Siler will speak about the history and legal implications of this pivotal American document.

Thursday, February 19: "Mother Spirit: Amelia Green," presented by Antonia Parker

Storyteller Antonia Parker will present the true story of Amelia Green, an African American woman who lived in New Bern in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. She worked to obtain her own freedom from slavery and then secured that of her family. This extraordinary woman later purchased property on George Street, where she lived for the remainder of her life.

Thursday, March 19: "Breaking Down Barriers," presented by Lillian L. Lambert

After graduating as the first African American woman to receive an MBA from Harvard in 1976, Lambert became a barrier-breaking entrepreneur. She will give a presentation about her incredible story of success and how, working from her garage with only a few thousand dollars, she established Centennial One, Inc., a building maintenance company that she then grew into a \$20 million dollar firm that today employs more than 1,200 individuals.

All lectures begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. and will take place in the Visitor Center Auditorium.

Sponsored in part by The Harold H. Bate Foundation.

2009 Volunteer Wish List

New Bern Academy "A" Team is seeking new volunteer guides to welcome in the New Year! Academy guides serve as resources for tales of the Academy's history from 1766 to 1971. Former students and newcomers are invited to join this spirited team. The Academy is open Monday-Saturday from 1:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m. Guides are requested to volunteer two afternoons a month, on days of their choice.

Architectural Walking Tour Guides

The Architectural Walking Tour kicked off in 2008 with much success. In 2009, we anticipate offering the tour twice a month beginning in March and running through December. This is an external look at selected houses on Metcalf, Johnson, Hancock, and New Streets. Put on your walking shoes and join us for an exciting new venture.

Gardening at Tryon Palace

Spring Heritage Plant Sale preparations begin long before the actual sale dates in April. Seeds must be planted and new growth maintained to ensure plants are available for resale. Many hands are needed for a successful spring sale, which serves as a fund raiser for our extensive gardens.

Museum and Garden Gift Shops

The need to recruit volunteers to staff the Museum and Garden Gift Shops is a high priority in January and February in preparation for spring school tours and increased spring tourism. Volunteers may select the days and hours they are available prior to the beginning of each month. On-the-job-training is provided by Paul Brown, Manager. Paul also provides a detailed Resource Help Book for quick reference. Stop by one of the shops and talk with Paul if you are interested in joining his team or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at (252) 514-4951 for this or any other volunteer opportunities.

As the New Year begins, we wish to express our sincere appreciation to each and every volunteer who gave so generously of their time and energy to enriching programs and services at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens during 2008. We look forward to your continuing support.

- Fran Campbell, Volunteer Coordinator



A Community Effort

Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens would like to extend a very special thanks to the City of New Bern Board of Aldermen and the Craven County Board of Commissioners for their support of the North Carolina History Education Center. Both the city and the county voted to make the funds available to help keep the project on schedule.

The North Carolina History Education Center, which is slated to open in 2010 as part of the 300th anniversary celebration of New Bern's founding, is expected to have a very positive impact on the region's economy, creating many new jobs and generating an economic impact of \$44 million annually for Craven County. We deeply appreciate the partnership and support of our community and its leaders.



Back row (left to right): Alderman Julius Parham, Jr.; Mayor Tom Bayliss, III. Front row (left to right): Aldermen Barbara Lee; Joseph Mattingly, Jr.; Robert Raynor, Jr.; Dana Outlaw
(Not Pictured: Mack L. Freeze)



Back row (left to right): Commissioners Perry Morris, Lee Kyle Allen, Steve Tyson, and Vice Chairman Theron McCabe. Seated (left to right): Commissioners Johnnie Sampson, Jr. Renee Sisk, and Chairman Jason Jones. Photo by Gwen Bryan.

In recognition

A number of employees at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens have contributed to the construction of the North Carolina History Education Center. As construction begins, their investment in the future of the organization and our long-term goals is a wonderful reminder of the shared excitement at the educational and economic opportunities this new institution will provide.

Donors:

Anne Horner	Cheryl Arthur Kite	Keith McCleave	Tim Minch
Karen O'Connell	Nancy E. Richards	Kay Phillips Williams	Billy Woolard

Colonial Revival

continued from page 4

wheels and accessorized by blue willow china arrangements displayed on sideboards next to canopied beds. Clusters of federal-style furniture were often crowded into rooms under the assumption that if colonial style was indicative of taste, more such pieces meant even greater refinement.

As the execution of the design became less authentic and more fictionalized, the dated scenes it created gave way to a fresh push for things modern and new. In light of post-war affluence, the rustic elegance of the colonial style was overshadowed by the ubiquitous vacuum cleaners and shiny chrome blenders of the 1950s.

But the legacy of the Colonial Revival movement remains

in the homes that were saved from destruction and the groups that continue to work for their preservation. It is evident in the clean lines of the federal style architecture of the early 20th century, which contrasts so greatly with the rambling beauty of the Victorian era. And it is present in the "antiques of tomorrow" that have become collectables in their own right. Colonial Revival design now stands as a testament to our shared national pride in America's history and the impeccable taste of its founding fathers and mothers. ❧

¹ Sarah E. Mitchell. "The Colonial Revival Home: A Short Overview." Colonial Revival in The United States: 1900-1940. www.vintagedesigns.com (accessed Sept. 29, 2008)

² Catherine Rogers Arthur. "The True Antiques of Tomorrow": Furniture by the Porthast Brothers of Baltimore, 1892-1975." *American Furniture 2000*. Luke Beckerdite, ed. Chipstone Foundation: Milwaukee, 2000. p. 31

³ Harry Desmond and Herbert Croly. *Stately Homes in America*. New York: D. Appleton, 1903. p. 92



Mrs. Bess Mitchener, Chair of the First Garden Committee

By Lisa Wimpfheimer, Curator of Gardens

The gardens at Tryon Palace are well known for their year-round beauty, and we are often asked if the designs and even the heirloom plants themselves are part of the original planting. Like the Palace building itself, the gardens are restored; and, also like the Palace building itself, their story is an interesting one.

In June 1955, Mrs. May Kellenberger addressed the need for landscaping around the Palace reconstruction. Since Morley Williams was already working on the archeology of the site, he was asked to create an estimate for the landscaping project. With experience in landscape design, this was not an unreasonable request, but it presented an unusual challenge: since there were no known historic plans at that time regarding the original Palace, Mr. Williams was directed to design gardens “that were beautiful and formal, like the ones at Williamsburg. With flowering trees framing the vistas of the river, a kitchen garden and formal flower gardens east and west of the Palace.”¹

At the December 1955 meeting of the Tryon Palace Commission, the Gardens Committee was formed to provide assistance and direction to Mr. Williams.

Mrs. James (Mary Elizabeth “Bess”) Mitchener was appointed chairman, with Mrs. Laurence Sprunt, Mrs. Paul Borden, Mr. Mack Lupton, and Mr. John Kellenberger serving on that first gardens committee.²

Mrs. Mitchener was also an original member of the Tryon Palace Commission and served from 1945-1987. She continued to chair the Garden Committee until stepping down in 1979. With her guidance, the gardens grew to accent the additional historic properties at the Tryon Palace Complex.

Miss Gertrude Carraway described Mrs. Mitchener as a woman with “vast experience with gardens and gardening—personally, publicly and officially – supplemented by study and research.” She added that Mrs. Mitchener “added to her vision and imagination, proved of paramount help in the



Bess Mitchener in the early 1980s.

successful development of these magnificent gardens designed in the manner of 18th century gardens in England.”³

The work of this extraordinary lady is present in the gardens even today. Besides being the organizing force behind the Palace’s grounds designs, the first chairwoman’s legacy is preserved in the white, columned structure in the Wilderness Garden. Dedicated on April 3, 1981, the structure is known as the Bess Mitchener Temple and is modeled after traditional 18th century garden structures. Gertrude Carraway gave the garden acceptance and dedication speech, and explained the temple’s meaning: “Although smaller in



The Bess Mitchener Temple in the Wilderness Garden.

size and unique in design, it is somewhat similar to historic temples. It contains an inner sanctuary, colonnades, gateways and surrounding trees, plants and flowers. Its circular shape, open to the sky, has special meaningful significance.”

“Its purpose too, is traditional. It was procured to honor one of the Tryon Palace Commission’s most valuable members and officers for her ‘heroic achievements’ for the commission, the restoration complex, the city, the State and the Nation.”⁴

So upon your next visit to Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens, take time to walk out in the Wilderness Garden and visit the Bess Mitchener Temple, a place of quiet reflection among the native trees and song birds who reside there. It is a small way to honor one woman’s long-lasting and perennial contribution to the beauty of Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens. ☞

¹ Tryon Palace Commission, Executive Committee minutes June 9, 1955

² Robinson, Blackwell P. 1978. *Three Decades of Devotion: The Tryon Palace Commission*. New Bern, NC, p.84

³ Tryon Palace Commission meeting minutes April 3, 1981

⁴ Tryon Palace Commission meeting minutes April 3, 1981

Mark you calendar...

The 2009 Garden Lovers Weekend and the Spring Heritage Plant Sale will be Friday, April 17 and Saturday, April 18.



2009: a Year of Celebration

From my office window in the Daves House, as I write on this overcast November day, I can see the pile driver on the North Carolina History Education Center site beyond the kitchen office roof and the treetops. The view and the repetitious sound are surreal.

After years of dreaming, hoping, and planning, the History Education Center began to take on a physical reality when the construction manager, Clancy & Theys, moved its mobile unit in place late in the 2008 summer. At the driving of the first pilings on October 14, Sue Book wrote in the New Bern *Sun Journal*, “For those looking on, that piling is a weighty symbol that the project, under development since 2000, is really going to be built. But Kay Williams, director of Tryon Palace, said, ‘It has been real to me for a long time. Those of us associated with it have not doubted that it was going to happen. It has not been an *if*, it’s been a *when*.’”

It was not originally planned that the *Making History* Capital Campaign, the construction schedule for the Center, and the 50th anniversary of what is now Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens would come together in the penultimate year before New Bern’s 300th anniversary. However, this extraordinary set of circumstances is providing the framework for yet another history-making period in the life of the Palace.

At the June 2008 groundbreaking for the North Carolina History Education Center, the public phase of the capital campaign, “Making History for all the People,” was unveiled. A final goal of just over \$5 million was announced that would complete the Center’s \$60.6 million campaign. The fall 2008 edition of *The Palace* magazine presented a new and expanded naming opportunities list for the History Center.

Concurrently, the Palace organization was planning its 50th anniversary for 2009. An exhibit, scheduled to open in March, will showcase the foresight and dedication of those who dared to believe that the restoration of a palace that had burned 150 years earlier – albeit North Carolina’s colonial capitol – was important enough to move a highway and a bridge. The exhibit will chronicle and celebrate the preparation for the Palace restoration and its April 1959 opening.

For 2009, these intersecting events are riveting our attention and energy into focus – to celebrate the Palace’s 50th anniversary, to finalize the last steps of the campaign for the History Education Center, and to get ready for the Center’s opening during New Bern’s year-long 300th celebration in 2010. Locally and state-wide, events and activities will be promoted and held that will look to the past and to the future – and will seek the final \$5 million funding for the Center.

A wide range of giving opportunities has already been made available, and at levels so everyone can participate. Gifts and investments can be made as a tribute to North Carolina’s heritage, to pave the way to teach history with twenty-first-century methods, or to create ownership and pride in a bigger, better, and brighter Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens. Gifts and investments can be made in an outright payment, with a pledge and payment schedule, with securities, or as a part of an estate plan.

The Tryon Palace family invites you to join in this anniversary celebration in 2009 – with your visit to the 50th anniversary exhibit after its March opening, with your support in regional fund-raising activities, and with your generous gift to celebrate the anniversary and invest in the future.



North Carolina History Education Center construction site, as viewed from the east.

–Cheryl Arthur Kite, Director of Development

To become a history maker in “Making History for all the People”, to discuss a gift plan, or for information about any of the events or projects in this article, contact Cheryl Kite, Director of Development, at 252-514-4956 or ckite@tryonpalace.org.



Our New Friends

The Tryon Palace Council of Friends welcomes the following members who have joined between September 3, 2008 and November 6, 2008.

PATRON

Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Sheffield, Jr.,
New Bern

SPONSOR

Mr. and Mrs. Bud Parker, New Bern

FAMILY/GRANDPARENT

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Carter, New Bern
Mr. and Mrs. Chadwick K. Howard, Merritt
Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Nicholson, New Bern
Mrs. Mary E. Pearce and Ms Naomi M. Moore,
New Bern

SUPPORTER

Mr. and Mrs. John A. Battista, New Bern
Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Bowdle, New Bern
Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Caskey, New Bern
Mrs. Margaret Egan and Mr. Harold Erickson,
New Bern
Mr. and Mrs. Philip M. Herman,
Hendersonville
Ms Emma Lupton, Oriental
Mr. and Mrs. Ron Moore, New Bern
Mr. and Mrs George Orsega, New Bern
Ms Ruth E. Reynolds, New Bern
Mr. and Mrs. Charles T. Schilling, New Bern
Mr. and Mrs. Wilbert Sowell, Clayton
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Thomas, Ocean Isle Beach
Mrs. Elvira T. Woodworth, New Bern
Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Yecke, Searcy, AR

ASSOCIATE

Mrs. Helen Conklin, New Bern
Mr. Bradley Cummings, New Bern
Ms Barbara V. Daly, New Bern
Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Daniels, New Bern
Ms. Glenna L. Davis, New Bern
Mr. John G. Ferrara, New Bern
Mrs. James Morrison, New Bern
Mrs. Mary T. Paulik, New Bern
Ms. Katy Pugh, Oriental
Ms Patricia B. Rivett, New Bern
Ms Shirley G. Williams, New Bern

STUDENT

Mr. Douglas M. Bacskey, Vanceboro

Annual Campaign

By Karen O'Connell, Friends Coordinator

In October 2008, the Council of Friends launched its 2008 Annual Campaign. The Friends are very fortunate to have Elizabeth and David Ward as chairs of the Campaign. Elizabeth and David have been faithful supporters of Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens and the Council of Friends for many years, and their chairmanship of this year's campaign is proving to be very successful. A campaign report will be provided in the spring 2009 *Palace* magazine as a part of the annual report.

Council of Friends members are asked to consider contributing to the Annual Fund portion of the Annual Campaign, which is giving in addition to their regular membership gifts. If you have not yet made your contribution, please do so and continue to support North Carolina's premier historic site!



The Tryon Palace Council of Friends would like to extend our sincerest thanks to David and Elizabeth Ward for their work on behalf of this organization, working as the Chairs of our Annual Campaign in 2008. Additionally, David has served as the Council of Friends president since May 1994, and will be stepping down in February of 2009. The nearly 15 years that David has tirelessly dedicated to the Friends speak to his intense commitment to preserving and sharing North Carolina's early history. We are truly grateful for the Wards' service to Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens.

Friends Movie Series

In 2009, Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of Tryon Palace. In keeping with the many events that will focus on this anniversary, the Council of Friends' monthly movie series will feature some of the top movies from 1959. Please come join us as we look back at what was popular when the Palace opened.

Tuesday, January 6: *Room at the Top*

When ambitious Joe Lampton joins a theatrical troupe as a diversion from his otherwise lackluster life in an English factory town, he enters into a daring flirtation with two women: an older woman and his boss' daughter. This film stars Academy Award winner Simone Signoret and Laurence Harvey

Tuesday, February 3: *Some Like it Hot*

After witnessing the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, two hard-up musicians must flee Chicago before the mob tracks them down. Their only option is an all-female band headed to Florida – so the two men don wigs and dresses and find themselves in a different kind of pursuit. Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis, and Jack Lemmon star in this Oscar-winning comedic masterpiece.

Tuesday, March 3: *Beloved Infidel*

After his literary success and wild lifestyle, F. Scott Fitzgerald finds himself battling alcoholism in Hollywood and struggling to write for the studios in an effort to pay for his wife's treatment in an asylum. Shelia Graham, a gossip columnist and struggling writer, begins to inspire Fitzgerald as he struggles with his past and the talent that now seems to elude him. Hollywood greats Gregory Peck, Deborah Kerr, and Eddie Albert come together in this biographic look at one of America's most gifted authors.

All films begin at 7 p.m. in the Visitor Center Auditorium. Admission is free.



Winter Pastimes

By Paul Brown, Retail Operations Manager

Pass the cool winter days with a great family pastime and discover the Old North State at the same time. The Museum & Garden Shops introduces from White Mountain Puzzles (of Jackson Village, New Hampshire) a colorful 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle of Historic North Carolina. Stretching from the Crystal Coast to the Great Smoky Mountains, North Carolina has evolved into one of the leading industrial and tourism state in the South. Its distinguished and vast history is depicted in detail by award-winning artist, Lynn Morgan. Included are the first attempted English settlement in America (1587), the first permanent Colonial Capitol (1770), and the first successful manned flight in an engine-powered airplane (1903). John Spilsbury, a London



mapmaker and engraver, is credited with commercializing jigsaw puzzles around 1760. Thus, this engaging romp through our state's history is really a modern celebration of an 18th century novelty. *Also available are a 25"x30" limited edition poster and 6"x8" postcard of the puzzle's image.*



Cross-stitch is one of the oldest forms of embroidery and can be found all over the world. Two-dimensional cross-stitch designs with floral and geometric patterns is characteristic of folk embroidery in Eastern and Central Europe. Corner Stitch Design, a local New Bern company, proudly presents their Tryon Palace counted cross stitch design kit. Each kit contains everything you'll need to complete a beautiful rendition of the Palace: fiddler's fabric, DMC floss, chart, and instructions. A sampler chart of the Palace is also available, and is reminiscent of those "wrought" by young ladies in the 18th century. Girls as young as seven years old would work samplers displaying their abilities with varying stitches. In the United States, the earliest known cross-stitch sampler is currently housed at Pilgrim Hall in Plymouth, Massachusetts. The sampler was created by Loara Standish, the daughter of Captain Myles Standish, circa 1653.



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