



## **Tar River Center for History and Culture Annual Report**

**June 1, 2016-May 31, 2017**

### Introduction

During the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the Tar River Center for History and Culture, an office of Louisburg College, undertook a wide range of activities to promote interest in the history of Franklin County and the Upper Tar River region. The director, who became a half-time employee beginning in June 2016, wrote historical articles for the local press, crafted grant proposals, developed programs for adults, and supported a variety of historic preservation efforts. This work was made possible by the financial support of Louisburg College, Franklin County, and the Town of Louisburg. The members of the Board of Directors of the Tar River Center for History and Culture Foundation aided these efforts.

### Accomplishments

#### ***Tar River Roots***

The Director continued a regular column in *The Franklin Times*, Tar River Roots. During the fiscal year, he published twelve articles in this series. An effort was made to base the articles on primary sources and to address topics that have been neglected by historians. The articles are available on the Web site of the TRCHC. The Director received many favorable comments concerning these articles.

#### ***Lecture Series***

The TRCHC sponsored a lecture series, Historic Preservation: Building Community and Enhancing Prosperity.

Friday, September 16, 2016

“North Carolina’s Main Street Program”

Liz Parham, Director, North Carolina Main Street Center

“Leveraging Main Street’s Designs: Dollars and Data  
Robert Davie, Town Administrator, Warrenton, North Carolina

Thursday, November 3, 2016

“Preservation Makes Sense Economically . . . and in So Many Other Ways”  
J. Myrick Howard, President, Preservation North Carolina

Friday, February 24, 2017

“Moravian Legacy: A Landscape History with Practices and Tips from Old Salem Gardens”  
Martha B. Hartley, Director of Research and Outreach, Restoration Division,  
Old Salem Museum and Gardens

“The Kitchen garden at the Joel Lane Museum House—A Colonial Garden and Its Relevance  
Today  
Laura Willer, Owner, Laura Willer Landscape Design

Thursday, March 30, 2017

Joeseeph E. Elmore Lecture

“African American Artisans in North Carolina and the Tar River Valley”  
Catherine Bishir, Curator of Architecture, Special Collections Research Center,  
North Carolina State University Libraries

The series attracted an average of more than forty attendees, an increase of approximately fifteen over the previous year.

### ***Oral History Initiative***

The director worked with Louisburg College Webmaster Robert Strickland to make available on the TRCHC website transcripts and audio excerpts of five of the twelve interviews conducted during 2015 for An Oral History of School Desegregation in Franklin County, North Carolina, a project funded by the North Carolina Humanities Council. This work will continue during the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

### ***Historic Preservation Efforts***

Using \$45,000 of its own funds, the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office hired Dr. Jeroen van den Hurk of Commonwealth Heritage Group to undertake Phase II of the comprehensive survey of Franklin County’s historic architecture. The year-long project, which will be completed in February 2018, entails in-depth documentation of 170 properties in Franklinton, Louisburg, and Youngsville, as well as 265 structures elsewhere in Franklin County. Van den Hurk will take photos of and record historical information concerning important residences, churches, industrial buildings, schools, and stores. Public access to the data will be

available through HPOWEB, the State Historic Preservation Office's online geographic information system accessed at <http://gis.ncdcr.gov/hpweb/>. The data will assist environmental review work by local, state and federal agencies and will aid in planning for future growth in the county. The survey data will be useful also in developing programs to promote heritage tourism in Franklin County and will be the basis for a publication on the county's historic architecture. This project is a follow-up to Phase I of the project, undertaken in 2015 and 2016, which was funded by the Franklin County Tourism Development Authority and the Franklin County Commissioners. The director worked with Dr. van den Hurk to enlist help from local volunteers in obtaining access to or information about many of the structures being surveyed. He organized a meeting held in the Franklin Academy building on the Louisburg College campus on March 13, 2017, to encourage the participation of these volunteers. In addition, he responded to several requests by Dr. van den Hurk for information about structures being surveyed.

During the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, the director worked with Franklin County Planning Director Scott Hammerbacher, Franklin County Economic Development Director Richie Duncan, and the State Historic Preservation Office in proposing a historic preservation ordinance for consideration by the Franklin County Board of Commissioners. The commissioners approved the ordinance on April 24, 2017. It calls for a historic preservation commission consisting of seven members. The commission will oversee a variety of endeavors, including the designation of local landmarks and rural historic districts.

### ***Fund Raising***

The Director raised funds for the construction of a museum-quality exhibit case in which to house the historic Louisburg Dugout Canoe at Terrell Lane Middle School in Louisburg. He applied for a grant from the Franklin County Community Foundation for this purpose. In addition, he applied for and received funding from the North Carolina Humanities Council for a grant to sponsor the Tar, Pitch, and Turpentine demonstration at the River of Yesteryear, part of the Tar River Festival scheduled for October 7, 2017.

### ***Tar River Center for History and Culture Foundation, Inc.***

During the fiscal year, the Director met five times with other members of the Tar River Center for History and Culture Foundation Board of Directors (Felix Allen, Chair; Mark La Branche, Vice-Chair; Randy Thomas, Treasurer; Sue Guerrant, Secretary; Peggy McGhee; and Harriette Sturges). He organized the annual meeting held on February 2, 2017, and kept board members apprised of developments related to the work of the TRCHC. He worked with the President and Treasurer to ensure that bills, including monthly rent payments to Louisburg College, were paid in a timely fashion.

The Director facilitated the work of craftsmen involved in the stabilization of the old Franklin County jail in downtown Louisburg, a project spearheaded by the Foundation. The craftsmen included Charles Toney, who restored the front door; Allen Tharrington, who fabricated

replacement windows, and Joseph Spivey, who installed the windows. The windows were glazed by Perry Glass Company of Henderson and painted by Johnny Aycock. By the end of the fiscal year, four of the fourteen windows had been fabricated and installed. Members of the board were active in soliciting funds for the replacement windows.

The foundation received generous contributions during the year from Franklin County and the Town of Louisburg, as well as from the donors listed at the conclusion of this report.

### ***Publicity***

In addition to assisting staff members of Louisburg College in preparing periodic press releases, the Director produced thirty-four posts for the TRCHC's Facebook page. These provided access to Tar River Roots articles and promoted events sponsored by the TRCHC. By the end of the fiscal year, 299 persons had "liked" the page—an increase of 75 during the period. A posting dated May 30, 2017, reached nearly 5,000 people. The Director worked also with Robert Strickland, Louisburg College's webmaster, to keep the TRCHC's Web pages up to date. In addition, the Director, with the help of staff at Louisburg College, produced the first edition of the TRCHC's newsletter, *History Matters*, which appeared in December 2016. The center distributed hundreds of copies of the *Tour Historic Louisburg* booklet to Interstate Highway welcome centers in North Carolina.

### ***Planning***

On May 2, 2017, the TRCHC sponsored a public forum at the Police/Fire Training Center in Louisburg, to solicit ideas for future work. Approximately twenty people attended the forum, which was facilitated by Maury York, Sue Guerrant, Harriette Sturges, and Dru York. After individuals made their suggestions, those at each table presented their top three or four priorities. The six categories pertained to development of "Depot Hill" and walking trails along the Tar River in Louisburg; fundraising; creation of a tourism welcome center, perhaps in the old Franklin County jail; restoration of "Milner's Crystal Spring" between Nash and Johnson Streets in Louisburg as part of a mini-park area; development of genealogical study center; and oral history projects, perhaps with the involvement of public school students. Participants then used colored stickers to "vote" for their personal priorities. The results were as follows:

1. Depot Hill and River; economic development and heritage tourism: 43 points
2. Money – Finding a champion (e.g., legislator): 20 points
3. Welcome center/Jail: 17 points
4. Spring(s)/park: 14 points
5. Genealogical study center: 13 points
6. Oral history (African American, Latino, student activities): 12 points

### *Community Service*

The Director undertook the following community service activities during the year:

September 10, 2016 – Helped to organize the River of Yesteryear demonstrations at the annual Tar River Festival, including the Tar, Pitch, and Turpentine presentation given by a group headed by Bryan Avery of Angier.

September 12, 2016 – Gave a presentation to the Wake Forest Rotary Club on the Tar River Center for History and Culture and manned the TRCHC information table all day, giving out walking tour booklets and lecture series brochures.

September 13, 2016 – Provided suggestions to Bryan Avery concerning his video documenting the production of tar, pitch, and turpentine in North Carolina.

November 7, 2016 – Assisted a writer from England in determining how to credit an image in a Tar River Roots column he discovered on the center's website.

November 8, 2016 – Provided biographical sketch of Louisburg architect Marion Stuart Davis and information about buildings he designed to Catherine Bishir for inclusion in the North Carolina Architects and Builders website, North Carolina State University:  
<http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/>

November 14, 2016 – Worked with Pat Hinton of the Cecil W. Robbins Library to select reels of microfilm to be digitized by the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

December 14, 2016 -- Assisted Mr. Mark Person of Richmond, Virginia, in finding information about his grandmother, who was listed in the catalog of Louisburg Female College for 1903-1904.

January 17, 2017 – Met with Mary Jo Buffaloe at the Youngsville Museum of History to give advice on future directions and funding for the museum.

January 18, 2017 – Assisted agricultural extension agent Martha Mobley with research for a talk on agriculture in North Carolina during the past century.

January 30, 2017 – Provided Bo Carson of Franklin County Economic Development office a document listing interesting facts about Franklin County and its people, for use at the State of the Research Triangle Banquet in May.

February 7, 2017 – Provided George Blackburn of Henderson information about the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad and its relationship to Henderson, for use in an exhibit being developed for a local museum.

February 15, 2017 – At the request of the Greater Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, spoke to the annual Leadership Franklin class on the history of Franklin County.

March 21, 2017 – Provided Louisburg Town Administrator Jonathan Franklin with a history of hotels that have stood on the site of the Lancaster Building on North Main Street, 1882-1939. This included links to Sanborn maps and old postcard images depicting the hotels.

March 27, 2017 – Supplied Louisburg Town Manager Jonathan Franklin with documentary photographs depicting store buildings located on East Nash Street.

March 28, 2017 – Gave Franklin County Library Director Holt Kornegay information concerning the history of the building now occupied by the Franklin County Tax Office.

April 10, 2017 – Assisted online patron Glenn Arthur Pierce with information concerning the sports mascot of Kittrell College.

April 11, 2017 – Visited Vivian Lucas, director of the Franklinton Center at Bricks in Whitakers, N.C., to discuss ways in which the two organizations might cooperate. Followed up by giving her advice concerning grant funding for a restoration project and information concerning the Traveling Archivist Program of the North Carolina State Archives.

### ***Donations***

The Tar River Center for History and Culture Foundation gratefully acknowledges generous donations from the following individuals and institutions:

#### Government Appropriations

Franklin County  
Town of Louisburg

#### Gifts for Stabilization of the old Franklin County Jail

Franklin County  
Town of Louisburg

Allen Brothers Company LLC  
Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Davis  
First Citizens Bank  
Ford Warehouses  
Franklin County Historical Society  
Heritage Society of Franklin County  
Hodges Insurance Agency  
Alice P. Hunter  
Dr. and Mrs. Mark D. La Branche  
Rustic Building Supply  
Butch Strickland  
Toney Lumber Company  
Triangle Insurance and Associates  
Wester Farms Agricultural Transport LLC  
Wester's Front End and Brake Shop

Gifts for Construction of Exhibit Case for Historic Louisburg Dugout Canoe

Jesse and Shirley Alford  
Mr. and Mrs. Ken Billings  
Mrs. Catherine W. Bishir  
Mrs. Marla Gupton Coleman  
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen M. Dimig  
Mrs. Mary Margaret Ellis  
Dr. Diane Fleming  
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Mrs. Blake Y. Honeycutt  
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Mrs. Ann Cobb Williamson

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Conclusion

The Tar River Center for History and Culture continues to fulfill its mission of bringing people of the Upper Tar River region together around a sense of shared history. During the year, the TRCHC provided meaningful cultural opportunities for area citizens and undertook efforts that can, in time, enhance the region's appeal as a tourist destination. This work would not be possible without the outstanding support of Franklin County, the Town of Louisburg, Louisburg College, and the Board of Directors of the Tar River Center for History and Culture Foundation. The Director is grateful for this support and for the opportunity to serve the people of the region.

