

Fort Macon Ramparts

Volume XV
Summer 2007



Summer Concerts are Underway

by Tom Kelly

The Friends of Ft. Macon Summer Concert Series is now celebrating its 10th year of free shows in the Fort's parade grounds! So far this season, it looks like we're off to our best year ever. On June 15, our great emcee Maryann Molnar was looking out at a crowd of almost 800 people who came to see the Unknown Tongues play their Cajun music. That night, we found that the Fort

can accommodate that many or more—though the parking lot didn't fare so well! Some folks were parking beyond the Coast Guard Station. No one complained, though—it was a beautiful night and the spirit of Mardi Gras took control.

We've made some changes this year that seem to be paying off for the Friends—here are a few:

continued on page 3

THE DATE ON YOUR MAILING LABEL INDICATES THE MONTH AND YEAR THAT YOUR CURRENT MEMBERSHIP EXPIRED OR WILL EXPIRE IN THE FUTURE.

A Message from the President

This issue of the Ramparts was prepared by the team of Chuck and Katherine Bland. They agreed to take over as Editors of the *Ramparts* when Les Ewen decided to retire as Vice-President of the Board and as editor of this award-winning newsletter. Les has been one of the most active and productive volunteers in the county over many years, particularly with his work for the History Place and the Friends of Fort Macon. We can't thank him enough for his contribution to the Friends. He, rightfully, felt it was time to start to reduce his volunteer activities and have a little more free time. Chuck and Katherine are well qualified for this function and we look forward to their contribution to the *Ramparts*.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to publicly recognize and thank the other members of the Board of the Friends for their outstanding support for our organization. My heartfelt thanks to:

Gwyn Towles, Secretary and Program Chairman. Besides her regular secretarial duties she arranges for these outstanding speakers we have for our monthly meetings.

Paul Molner, Treasurer and Chairman of Administration Services. Paul handles all of our financial activities, makes grant applications, effectively utilizes funds we receive from The Tourist Development Association, maintains current membership lists, arranges for Ramparts mailings, and many other tasks. We could not function if it were not for Paul.

Fran and Frank Rock, Co-chairs of the Membership Committee. This team has done a magnificent job of increasing our individual and business membership. We now have over 1400 members, largest in our history.

Shirley Pleace, as Publicity Chair, keeps all the media advised as to our activities and is always willing to volunteer for any other needs as may arise.

Tom Kelly arranges for the concerts at the Fort and has done a magnificent job of promoting these events. He also coordinates with Shirley Pleace on overall publicity activities.

Joe Beam, as Chairman of the Tour Guides and Greeters at the Fort, has organized an outstanding group of volunteers, who play a major role in handling the thousands of visitors to Fort Macon. Joe is another of our Board members who has been a major volunteer for many organizations in the area for many years.

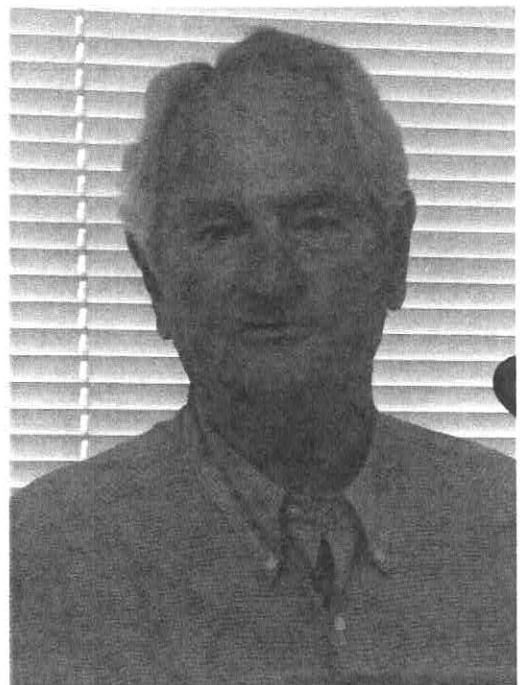
Warren Brinkley, as Distribution Manager, arranges for distribution of thousands of our brochures and other advertising materials to hotels, businesses, visitor centers, etc. locally and throughout the state. We did not do a very good job of this function until Warren took it over and got it organized.

Bill Gilbert is our Website Servant. Bill created a great website for the Friends and maintains it with the latest information on the Friends. Bill also created and handles our input to the Central County Community Blog. Bill is recovering from a major medical problem, but still plans to continue his work with the Friends.

With a great Board like this, it's easy to be President.

Sincerely,

Grayden Paul



continued from page 1

--We added an additional show, bringing in a bluegrass band (Mac and Tammy McRoy Band from Beaufort County)—so yet another appropriate American music tradition is represented at the Fort. That required us to alter the “every-other-week” format a little—with three shows on consecutive weeks in July. Thanks to Superintendent Jody Merritt and the Park Rangers for accommodating us!

--To ensure that we didn’t have to tap into our funds to cover costs, we acquired a sponsor this year. Randall Parker, whose family has a close history with the Fort dating back to the Civil War, was very kind to become our sponsor. You may have seen our advertising mentioning that “Parker Pontiac—Buick—GMC and Parker Honda are proud sponsors of our 2007 concert series”. We deeply appreciate that support and generosity!

--We expanded our media activity this year. Our Treasurer Paul Molnar put together a grant proposal to the Carteret County Tourism Development Authority which gave us additional funds to spend “for the purpose of bringing visitors to Carteret County”. Thanks to his effort, we were able to advertise on TV (Channel 12 ABC), Radio (105.1), and the Weather Channel, in addition to over 20 media contacts throughout the area. The spots are primarily geared to promote Ft. Macon State Park itself, but each week inserts are added mentioning the upcoming concert. We think we’ve spent the funds well, and to the benefit of area tourism as well as our shows.

--We’ve arranged the order of the concerts to keep it varied, and timed the appearance of the Carteret Grays to kick off a weekend of reenactment activities at the Fort (July 13, 14 and 15). This enabled us to get extra mileage from our promotional efforts to everyone’s benefit.

Thanks to all for making this year a successful one!

Tom Kelly

Schedule of Remaining Concerts

July 13 - Carteret Grays Camp Band (music from Civil War-era soldiers and sailors)

July 20 - Morehead Brass Consortium (All-brass, classical to contemporary)

July 27 - Mac and Tammy McRoy Band (bluegrass, traditional and original)

August 10 - Bogue Sounds (acoustic, American and British Isles/Celtic)

Monthly Meetings and Speakers

The Friends meet at the Golden Corral in Morehead City on the 1st Wednesday of each month. Brief business meetings are followed by wonderful speakers. Be sure to put these meetings on your calendars.

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| July 11 | “Steamboats in North Carolina”
Paul Fontenoy from the NC Maritime Museum |
| August 1 | “History Matters”
Betty Rae McCain, former NC Secretary of Cultural Resources |
| September 5 | “Coastal Whaling in the 19th Century”
Randy Newman, Ranger at Fort Macon |
| October 3 | “Lighthouses of North Carolina”
Bruce Roberts, photographer |
| November 7 | “Shackleford Banks Horses”
Carolyn Mason, Directs the Banks Horses Association. |

Friends for Thirty Years

by Bennett Moss

It was in 1977 that seven members of the Carteret Historical Research Association gathered together to form The Friends of Fort Macon. So began, in a very small way, an organization dedicated to the restoration and preservation of historic Fort Macon. As 1977 began, the Fort was in desperate condition. Very little had been done to reverse the ravages of time since the efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The nascent Friends organization had little in the way of financial resources or political influence, but they had an abundance of determination to do anything they could do to help reverse the shameful process of neglect and decay that had afflicted Fort Macon for so many years.

The Friends group operated as a subordinate component of The Carteret Historical Research Association (CHRA), which in later years became the Carteret County Historical Society (CCHS). The CHRA was in itself a very young organization that was still feeling its way around, looking for a new home, and trying to grow.

In 1975, the president of the CHRA, a very assertive and energetic woman named Emily Loftin, learned that the state legislature had actually appropriated \$367,000 back in 1970 for restoration work on Fort Macon. Because the Division of Parks and Recreation had no plan for the use of the money, it had remained unspent, but still available. To understand how such a situation could exist, one should keep in mind that Fort Macon State Park is the only state park which contains a significant historic site. All of the other historic sites in North Carolina are under the jurisdiction of the Division of Archives and History. With more than 30 state parks to administer, the Division of Parks and Recreation did not view historic preservation as one of its major functions.

When Emily Loftin learned of the unspent funds available for work at Fort Macon, she sensed a golden opportunity for generating a new mission for the CHRA, with attendant publicity and membership growth. In 1976 she began a correspondence with officials in the Parks Division offering them her

guidance on how they should spend the money, and of the major role that CHRA could play as the liaison between the Park and the community. To the great surprise of no one but Emily, she was informed that the Parks Division was quite capable of planning the restoration work without her assistance, but the support of the community would always be welcomed. Without any official encouragement, Emily Loftin and the CHRA proceeded to create the Friends group in recognition of the principle that supporting worthy causes will always be appreciated by the community.

The Friends of Fort Macon elected their own officers, and were careful not to associate too closely with Emily Loftin or the CHRA. Nevertheless, they continued to be administratively a part of the CHRA. It would be another 15 years before they would acquire their own address, tax exempt status, and corporate identity. In the first years of their existence they focused their efforts on establishing a relationship with the Park Superintendent, raising funds that could be used to provide exhibits for the Fort, and recruiting more members. It was during their first year, in 1977, that the funds originally appropriated in 1970 were finally expended on the restoration of some of the casemate rooms in order to make them suitable for displaying historical artifacts.

It was not often during their first decade that the Friends' roster of active members exceeded 30 names. In spite of their small numbers, the Friends were able to chalk up some important achievements. Their efforts contributed to the establishment of the first position in the Park system for a Ranger/Historian, filled by Paul Branch in 1981. The Friends were also able to procure a grant that partially funded the construction of a new World War II barracks exhibit.

In the mid-1980s the Friends elevated H. F. "Van" Van der Voort to the presidency. Van was one of the most effective leaders the Friends have ever had. He spent more than two years trying to convince the Division of State Parks to permit the installation of a donation box at Fort Macon. Finally, Van went to Raleigh to meet with Governor Martin in order to break the log jam. The donation box for visitors

provided, for the first time, a steady stream of income that the Friends used for special exhibits and other support for Fort activities.

In the late 1980s, the Friends paid for a security system in order to prevent the theft of precious artifacts. The Friends also purchased new carriage wheels for the cannon on the Parade Ground. In 1987, under the chairmanship of Gene Dugan, the annual Spring lecture series was begun.

In 1992 a new dynamic leader took over the helm of the Friends. Kathryn Cloud, in her first two years, increased the Friends' membership from a mere forty souls to more than 400 enthusiasts. The numbers continued to grow until we finally crossed the magic threshold of 1,000 VOTERS! It now became possible to influence legislators in addition to government administrators.

In 1993, the first of our annual Ice Cream Socials commemorating the April 25th Battle of Fort Macon was introduced. The first issue of The Fort Macon Ramparts made its appearance in 1994.

1997 was a banner year for the Friends. That was the year that our very talented member, David Pleace, engineered and constructed a replica of the hot shot furnace built upon the foundation of the original 1836 furnace. Also that Spring, our first reproduction 32-pounder coastal defense gun was installed by helicopter. The Summer of 1997 also saw the completion of the steel carriages for our two Civil War mortars. Another innovation was the first use of Friends members as volunteer tour guides. Under the leadership of Nancy Donnan and Joe Beam, the volunteer docent program has proven to be a major accomplishment of the Friends' organization.

By the end of our second decade, the Friends

Roster of Friends' Presidents

1977 – Martha Loftin
1977 – Doug Fleming
1978 – Horace McLean
1980 – Arthur Brown
1981 – Neil Vester
1982 – Ed Baker
1983 – Carolyn McIntire
1985 – Henry Van der Voort
1990 – Jean Kell
1992 – Kathryn Cloud
1997 – Bennett Moss
2110 – Grayden Paul

had contributed many important improvements to the Fort and its operations. Yet our most important objective, the restoration of the Fort, had still not been accomplished. But the long awaited break-through was about to happen. In 1998, the Friends' lobbying efforts resulted in State Senator Beverly Perdue procuring two million dollars from the state's Repairs and Renovation Fund.. Although this was far short of the total cost, it was enough to get the project started.

Looking back at the first three decades of the Friends of Fort Macon, it is evident that the Fort which we see today would look very different if the Friends had not existed.

Other important achievements soon followed: A second cannon was acquired through the generosity of members Dean and Mickey Proper; our talented David Pleace, with the assistance of Don Russell, rebuilt the 5-kettle cooking range in the 1834 kitchen and dining room; the Friends started the highly popular summer concert series inside the Fort; and the head of the brick masons working on the Fort rebuilt the old bake oven with materials procured by the Friends.

This is only a partial list of the many ways in which the Friends have made important contributions to Carteret County's most important historical and cultural attraction. And it is fair to say that the future is every bit as bright as the past. We are about to witness the ground-breaking for the new Visitor Education Center. Following its completion will be the reconstruction of one of the 1867 officer's houses. These projects will open up some wonderful new volunteer opportunities for our members.

Looking back at the first three decades of The Friends of Fort Macon, it is evident that the Fort that we see today would look very different if the Friends had not existed. But don't for one moment think that there is nothing more for the Friends to accomplish. Just look at all of the empty casemates just crying out for new exhibits. The new facilities will also offer opportunities for new programs. And was there ever a better group to support than the wonderful staff at Fort Macon? So continue to march on, the best is yet to come!

Letter from a Union soldier



July 5, 1862

Over the years the Fort Macon Ramparts has included letters from soldiers who were stationed at the Fort or others who were living there. These wonderful letters give us a glimpse into the lives of those who long ago who called Fort Macon home. This letter is from a soldier of the 3rd New York artillery, Company I. Company I was one of two companies that manned the Union artillery batteries used against Fort Macon on April 25, 1862. The company then occupied the Fort and served as part of its garrison for the rest of 1862.

This letter was generously provided to *The Ramparts* by Swing and David Harre of Beaufort.

Dear Sister I Wrote to you quite a spell ago I have not received any leter From you yet I am Very ancious to get one From you so that I shall know Wether you got that money or not you wrote that you would go to Auburn and get it as soon as you could I am very glad that you sold the steer you got all he was worth I think The cow is mine for all any off them Folks that is a telling that the cow is theirs I say the cow is yours iff I do not come back again and all the rest off my things I dont thank folks for medeling With that what don't belong to them iff it is agoing on in this way you Can sell the cow for What you can get I Just as quick let ma have the cow to keepe this sumer as not but iff she is agoing to be mean about it I want you to sell her I worked and paid the money for the cow It is to mutch to loos When I am trying to save all I can I hope you got the other leter that I wrote to you a spell ago I don't know what to write you I Wrote to Caroline and have got no leter yet it is a good Ways for a leter to go through I hope that you aint botherd for postage stamps as I am It is very hard to get a stampe to put on a leter I Wish you would send me a lot iff you can get them I can write to you ofstener than I do on that account now be shure and send some stamps as the Compny that I belong to have been musterd for pay one Week ago we shall get our pay in three or four weeks I think and I shall send some more money to you I supose you have heard that Meclellen had taken richmon I heard that he took a greate many prisoners the news came through by Tellegraph iff that is the case the War will be over soon now Dear sister do Write to me and let me know about Maters and things be sure and send me some stamps direct your leters to Fort Macon North Carolina write soon from your brother James Collier