

# FOOTPRINTS OF THE PAST

PRESERVING FUQUAY-VARINA'S HERITAGE

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 8 MAY 2015

MUSEUMS OF FUQUAY-VARINA

## MUSEUMS OF FUQUAY-VARINA AT ASHWORTH PARK

The original agreement drawn up between the Town of Fuquay-Varina and the Friends of the Museums has taken a giant step this month.

The Board of Commissioners has implemented the "Master Plan" for sidewalks and lighting for the museums park as adopted by the town in 2010.

When completed, all the buildings will be accessible to mothers with strollers, seniors on walkers, handicapped in motorized chairs, and persons who benefit from a smooth walking surface.

Under the watchful eye of Parks and Recreation Director, Jonathan Cox, and Friends Board member, Max Ashworth, the walkways are projected for completion by the end of May.

Post lighting is promised by the fall, when night tours need this most. Interior lighting of the barn and playhouse are expected during this phase, too.

The final aspects of landscaping will not be completed until late fall. By that time, the Friends hope to have relocated the Caboose to its home in the park where volunteers, led by Tim Carroll, will begin the interior restoration project.

The caboose project will require funding efforts by all interested citizens and many hours of labor.

Contact Shirley Simmons at the museums if you can volunteer help in funding or skills. Information on materials needed will be available later in the summer.



**Peaceful Shade:** The Park will be a beautiful peaceful area for visitors.



**Sculpture Circle:** The Friends have accepted a sculpture by a local artist which will be placed in this area in front of the tobacco barn.



**Teaching Circle:** Grading for the teaching circle meant cutting down the hill to build a wall for seating.



**Walkways:** Walks had to be laid out to allow access for handicapped persons.

## NEW REASONS TO VISIT THE FUQUAY-VARINA MUSEUMS

### Mosler Cannonball Safe

The owner of the Bank of Varina 1925-1972, Albert Clay, gave the museums a special historical artifact. A Cannonball Safe, manufactured by the Mosler Safe Company of Hamilton, Ohio, now resides in the Centennial Museums. Home forever, we are still researching to determine just where it began life, where it may have journeyed along the years, and how it came to be in the Bank of Varina.

Clearly, it came to the Bank of Varina by special order.

When, we don't yet know. Lettered in gold, the quadruple safe, featured four mechanical principals. "It combines a Screw Door Safe, a Lug Door Safe, a Chambered Door Safe, and a Double Door Safe in one Master construction," boasts the Mosler Ad from the Hamilton Journal. Undated, the ad clearly was produced during World War I, referenced as "our new Liberty Bond type to take care of your funds." Named for its shape and heavy weight it was billed as "Absolutely Robbery Proof."

The Mosler Safe & Lock Company grew out of a company founded in Cincinnati in 1867. It relocated to Hamilton, Ohio in 1891 where it remained until its 2001 bankruptcy.

The Cincinnati Historical Society has become the repository for the company records. The curator is working with our museum to see whether she can find a receipt or bill of sale.



Donor, Albert Clay oversees move.



Leaving Varina



Two former bankers, Max Ashworth and Mayor John Byrnes



Arriving at the museums



Successful movers

## Dietz King Fire Dep't Lantern

Don Cook has given the museums a tin-frame version of the Dietz King lantern manufactured after 1906. Used on an American LaFrance Fire Engine in Danville, Virginia, the artifact came to the Cooks from Virginia Ann's father, a career fireman. The lantern was offered for sale into the 1940's, although production ceased in 1939.

## Norfolk Southern # 375 Prints

The beautiful red painted caboose has been painted by Andy Fletcher for our museum. Commissioned by Tim Carroll, the prints are available for sale either framed, unframed, or as a postcard.

Additionally, the museums will have several posters of engines and rail cars. All proceeds are designated for the "caboose fund."

Andy Fletcher began drawing trains when he was still in school. All of his drawings are done by hand with a pencil and watercolor pens.

He was unable to keep a booking invitation to visit us in Fuquay where he was scheduled to demonstrate his work. Much in demand, we are fortunate to have his work as promotional items for our Caboose Fund.



## Tobacco Barn Canvas

The museums are honored to receive an original oil canvas by Kaye Cloniger. Kaye is the daughter of Bruce Howard, former mayor of Fuquay-Varina, and the granddaughter of John E. Brown, agent at Varina Station for more than fifty years beginning in 1911. The barn is of frame construction, common within the area a few years ago.

This is the fourth canvas given to the museums by Kaye and her sister, Betty Bruce Howard Hoover.

## CELEBRATE FUQUAY-VARINA

The Museums of Fuquay-Varina will be open all day for the Celebration on June 6 10:00a.m.-4:00 p.m. Docents will be available for tours or to assist in each of the rooms or buildings. Full access to the new walkways, dependent upon the projected completion date, is expected by this festival.

We constantly find persons who are unaware of the existence of the museums. Please help us spread the word! Come and see our new artifacts! View and review our new park plans! Contribute to the Caboose Fund! Purchase a print, postcard, poster, or even a railway spike!

## DOCENTS NEED YOU

The Museums are constantly asked whether we have considered opening on more days of the week. Our docents need to see that the visitors support more public openings. How do you show this? Call for special tours or come on our Wednesday opening 1:00-4:00 p.m. The Friends welcome your input and suggestions but they NEED TO SEE MORE INTEREST!

## RECENT VISITORS ILLUSTRATE POSSIBILITIES AVAILABLE

Billy Ragsdale brought his son, daughter-in-law and grandson to tour the museums under the auspices of Jackie Seawell. The Ragsdale family has contributed pictures, scrapbooks, information, and even the picture of our FIRST MAYOR, Edward Ragsdale.

*Why not schedule your family trip or one of your social/civic groups?*

Willow Springs Elementary School second grade classes scheduled the museums as part of their unit on "local government functions." They combined a trip to the Town Hall with a visit to the museums. Three hours allowed us to conduct a four-way rotation in the museums with interpretative docents for two groups each track. Alternating with the Town Hall, these students are provided a great learning experience.

They observe the functions of town government, including a visit with the fire truck and fireman in one hour and spend about one and one-half hours in the school house, post office, and old municipal building jail. The park affords them a great opportunity to see what town government provides for their education and fun!



Willow Springs second grades arrive on May 8 for their tours.

Willow Springs teachers allow us two days to fully explore local government with all their second grades. Docents are experienced in working with students.



Second grade teacher signs in for all the students in Track 2 & 4 at the Post Office Museum.

Every school in Chatham County schedules one level of students into the Courthouse Museum in Pittsboro. Two Thursdays per month are reserved and scheduled for the year. Fuquay-Varina Museums surely cannot work with all Wake County students but the Teachers and Administrators of our town have utilized our museums at several levels.

Schools who have not scheduled tour should contact Shirley Simmons to discuss a specialized study or a unit. In-depth topical studies can be arranged to fit your curriculum and age level. The Museums of Fuquay-Varina would like to serve all our students!