

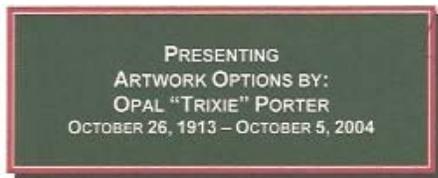
FOOTPRINTS OF THE PAST

PRESERVING FUQUAY-VARINA'S HERITAGE

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 14 OCTOBER 2017

MUSEUMS OF FUQUAY-VARINA

LOCAL ARTIST FROM OUR PAST RECOGNIZED



The daughter of a former artist in Fuquay-Varina chose to make an offer to the Friends of the Museums last year. Cheryl Porter McConnell grew up in Fuquay-Varina, graduated from the local high school, moved away, became an artist and professional, and then decided to return something of her family to our museums. She is an example of the kind of citizen who contributes to historical preservation and appreciation of her hometown.

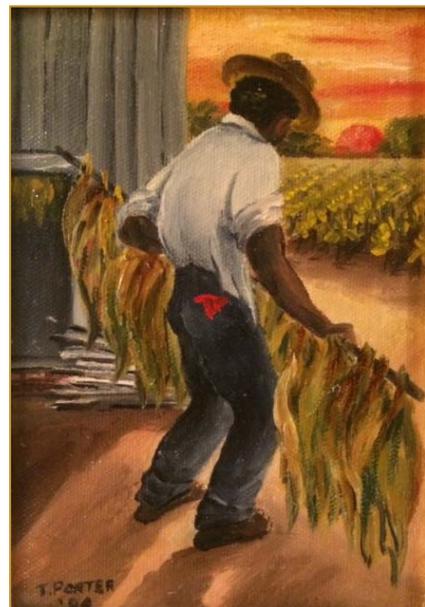
Cheryl has amassed a collection of her mother's work from her days in Fuquay-Varina.

Opel "Trixie" Porter came to town as the wife of a tobacconist. She was friend, neighbor, club woman and professional. Not content to sit idle, Trixie developed several art forms which she proudly sold at festivals and/or gave away to her friends.

Among her most remembered contributions were her Miniature Paintings on multiple subjects. Her most unusual artistic work was the painting of men's neckties. Her largest paintings were collected by many people in town and are still proudly hang on the walls of many homes.



Perhaps her best known work is the "Tobacco Man" which she gave to the Fuquay-Varina Woman's Club as part of her work in the Art Department of the club. This painting still graces the clubhouse. Her regular job was designer of house plans at Standard Homes.



The museums first displayed this art at our Heritage Day in 2017. Since that time, we have kept a number of works for sale. Cheryl gives a portion of the sales back to the museums.

Through October, the museums will maintain a large collection of miniature paintings, Christmas ornaments (two paintings on reverse sides), some paintings ready for framing, and notecards. Each piece is reasonably priced and available to purchase. After this fall, the museums will keep only a few selected items, but will be happy to place an order for any item. Cheryl regularly promotes her "Mother's Art" on Facebook and will take orders on-line, too. A complete listing is available at the museums.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN CABOOSE # 375 COMES TO ASHWORTH PARK

The Friends of the Museums received a wonderful surprise when on a Sunday afternoon, Ben Slaughter announced that he was ready to move the Norfolk Southern Caboose to Ashworth Park on Monday morning. August 21 was already a date for history with the eclipse but now another historical event would share the date forever.

The scramble began to get ready. The pad, laid by the Town of Fuquay-Varina some time before, had become silted over with sand. Quickly sweeping and washing began. Several ladies who were letting their children enjoy the playground, noticed our efforts and volunteered to man the shovels while we used the hose to wash away the sand.



On Monday, first to arrive was the fork lift commanded by Ben Slaughter. A clean pad was waiting for its caboose!



Next came the rails and trucks. The rails had to be set at just the right spacing for the trucks to be placed at either end.



Arthur, Gary and Tim all help the movers set the truck.



Carefully the forklift elevated the caboose and gingerly turned it around to come up the hill to the trucks.

The crowd gathered, watching the caboose while sneaking peaks at the eclipse, too.



The important workers posed beside their first stage of work while we awaited the body to get moved from Chalybeate to Fuquay. Tim Carroll, chairman of the project, Gary Culbertson, welder, Ben Slaughter and helper, who had engineered the moving and transportation.

Some were enlisted to give balance to the load while it was turned. Very precisely, Slaughter lowered the body onto the pins of the trucks.



Finally, an incredible sight, the red caboose rounded the corner on its big flatbed transport.



At last everything was completed. The caboose was home forever. (NS caboose) Max Ashworth, President of the Friends congratulated and thanked Ben Slaughter for all his efforts.





Securing the site to prevent trespassing was first completed by the town workers.



Almost immediately, hurricane rains threatened and the town covered the cupelo windows which could not be installed until some inside wood work was in place.



Since August, work has begun in earnest to complete

the inside restoration. Insulation was cut and placed between each section of metal and in the rood. Special pine wood, ordered by the Friends of the Museums, had to be measured, cut and installed. The walls came first, followed by the roof areas.



Ross, Jeffery, and Bill have faithfully spent their mornings, really getting going once power came on site.



While you read this report, they will be moving to the cupelo area, the cupelo windows, and then the construction of interior cabinets and bunks.

Eventually the inside will look like the home away from home it was for the conductors.

The workers trust that visitors will allow them to work in peace, without trespassing until the work can be completed. Estimated time for restoration is around the first of the year, maybe a Christmas present for all!

Our finale will be a grand celebration, recognizing everyone who worked on the project.

BUT the site will not be finished. Work will then begin on Fuquay's "Little Depot," the 1899 Raleigh & Cape Fear RR building, originally located on Depot Street.

We are not sure just when during the 1930's the building was torn down but one picture exists. We hope this depot can be reconstructed to join and complete our railroad part of the Fuquay-Varina Museums.

HAVE YOU SEEN OUR NEW SIGNAGE?

Thank you to the Town of Fuquay-Varina for the design of new signs for Ashworth Park. These have been well received. Another is planned for location in the front of the Centennial Museum & Archive in the old Municipal Building.



We thank Jon Cox and Susan Weis for reaching out to help with markers to be placed on each separate building of the museum complex.



These are on order and will match those you can already see on the Sundial Column, the Frances Ashworth Bench, and the Ghost Farmer Sculpture.

We encourage you to visit the Ashworth Park for a full tour. We hope the information on each will help you navigate the complex during a casual stroll as some visitors have requested. You still don't realize what you miss when you don't schedule a tour.

A caboose marker will await the completion of the caboose/depot museum.

PUBLICITY FOR CABOOSE/DEPOT PROJECT

The Friends of the Museums utilized their two-week Spotlight Table at the Chamber of Commerce to promote our caboose/depot project.



We hope the public will become interested in helping us with funding for these two new museum buildings.

Mike Weeks is preparing plans for the reconstruction of "The Little Depot" to be attached to our NS Caboose # 375. This plan will include the ramp/platform leading into the caboose and the reconstructed depot.

The Little Depot was located off Depot Street circa 1898 to serve the Raleigh & Cape Fear Railway. Originally, the line ended at this depot and the train backed into a Y and returned to Raleigh.

With expansion of the line south across the Cape Fear River circa 1903, the depot traffic expanded. Agents were assigned here through 1914.



The line became the Raleigh and Southport RR and in 1911 was purchased by "the nightly Norfolk and Southern" RR. The depot was closed when the Durham and Southern Depot at Varina Station began to function as a union depot for both lines. The building remained on Depot Street for some years but was demolished during the 1930's. Only one picture remains, originally from the Sessoms family.

SUNDIAL TO COMMEMORATE OUR WAREHOUSE HISTORY

The Tobacco Barn museum story expanded with the addition of a new attraction beside the barn. Thanks to Tim Carroll, who grew up in Varina, the Friends of the Museums acquired a collection of old bricks which we decided to use for a sundial column honoring our warehouse history in the area.



Weis lays out project

Living in the shadow of the Varina Brick Warehouse all

his life, Tim alerted the museums to the destruction of the old warehouse. The Friends accepted the collection of bricks, given to Tim by Ample Storage, as a wonderful "artifact" to complete our tobacco history.



The Smiths add expertise

Alex Weis, seeking a project for his Eagle Scout recognition, accepted our proposal for this sundial construction. The Smith gentlemen, brick masons working with Dan Turner, agreed to provide their expertise by building the column as a learning experience for Weis.



Weis and other scouts mix mortar

Provisionally, the Class of 1966, the last class to graduate under the name "Fuquay Springs High School" was planning a reunion. These proud grads asked what they might donate to the museums in honor of their class. THUS the entire project came to fruition with their donation of a sundial.



The completed column laid

The Weis family, working with Jon Cox of Parks and Recreation, have added a delightful patio with landscaping adjoining our barn. Jimmy Barnes and Jesse Wester have attached the sundial and set it for day-light savings time.



Finished sundial

The museums are happy to have this additional historical information included on the tours our docents give to visitors. Historically, our warehouse history completes our tobacco story.

TOBACCO LOOPING FOR 2017

The Celebrate Fuquay Festival provided a great opportunity to "loop or string" our tobacco for the 2017 display. A good crowd gathered including a number of children who were enlisted to hand leaves for their first

time. Bryant Tyndal, docent in charge of the barn that day, helped them to get the hang of their job. Tobacco gum (tar) was NEW to their hands.



Rosalind Snipes patiently took their bundles and looped them on the horse. Tobacco was in short supply by October 7, but Kent Revels managed to bring us a good supply of green leaves.

Aaron Betts brought a slide (sled) to the barn on Friday afternoon so we could place the leaves into the slide under the shelter for a "realistic" experience. The slide will remain as part of our continuous display.



Adding to the occasion, a number of by-standers chimed in with their "tobacco days" experiences so that the event provided good information to the newcomers and children.

Rosalind gave details of how tobacco was cured on the

Snipes farm. Bobby Barefoot recalled the neighbor helping neighbor "barning tobacco day."

Our docents are amassing quite good sources from which to draw their tour explanations.

Mickey Smith gave a presentation to a number of Quester docents. Much of his information came first hand from his childhood on his grandfather's farm. Many of them had never viewed the video of Mickey's family made in 1946 on the Rouse farm. (This video is available to the public in our audio visual collection.)



Jerry Holland's store of pamphlets and clippings provided much of our barn display boards. Al Prevatte has contributed an informative leaflet on the various types of tobacco marketed in North Carolina.



The green tobacco allows an authentic aroma in the barn for our fall tours. Docents will be showing this to

children from Fuquay-Varina Elementary and from Home School Tours in November.

HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

Something NEW has been added!

The Friends of the Museums are indebted to James Spidle, our webmaster, for adding a new dimension to [FACEBOOK](#) for the Fuquay-Varina Museums.

Historically Speaking is intended to teach, inform, and entertain our Face book friends. If you have not visited the page, look there for the entire story of Varina Brick Warehouse which opened the collection of articles.

We invite you to view other tidbits about Aaron Mason's Country Store, the J. F. Miller collection, and a picture we cannot identify.

Upcoming Museums Schedule

Monday mornings: 10-1 (closed 12/25 & 1/1)

Wednesday afternoons: 1-4 (closed 12/27)

Special Tours: The staff arranges tours for all groups as mutually worked out. This is better than a regular schedule because it involves weekends, nights, or meeting dates when museums are not generally open.