



FOOTPRINTS OF THE PAST

PRESERVING FUQUAY-VARINA'S HERITAGE

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 17 MARCH 2019

FUQUAY-VARINA MUSEUMS

Heritage Day: May 4, 2019

The Friends of the Museums have scheduled our annual HERITAGE DAY for May 4, 2019 between the hours of 10:00-4:00 in Ashworth Historic Park.

Much more detail will be forthcoming but our preliminary plans are as follows:

- 11:00 Dedication of Norfolk Southern Caboose #375
- Presentation of Revolutionary War Life from House in the Horse Shoe Museum
- Trolley Tours of Fuquay-Varina conducted by the museums during the afternoon
- Food Trucks will be engaged for lunch.
- All museums open with docents on duty for public.

Eagle Scout Project Completed

Daniel Rice, Troop 444, has completed his project in the park preparatory to his being awarded the recognition as an Eagle Scout. We look forward to his ceremony in the future. The project's beginning was detailed in our May, 2018 archived issue.

Mr. & Mrs. Tom Wiles donated 133 day lilies from their collection for planting in the Ashworth Park.

The entire Rice family, other members of Troop 444, Curt Lunchick, Scoutmaster, and friends worked to plant these last fall.

Susan Bailes, Garden Club President, and her family transported the lilies to the park when Mr. Wiles made them available.

Parks and Recreation workers have mulched portions of the beds. The Scouts, Mrs. Rice, Mr. Lunchick, and volunteer docents have weeded the beds.

We look forward to seeing how they perform this spring. A good many of these are unusual varieties for which we have left labels hoping they survive for some time as educational tools for visitors.

Another portion of the project was labeling trees in Ashworth Park. Daniel had the markers designed and printed for approximately 10 species so that visitors who are not familiar with our local plants may be better informed.

There are other trees which have not been identified but the markers provided are "cool." Daniel researched the material for these markers as part of his project. Among the plants now sporting a label is the rosemary which school children enjoy on their tours.

A third major component of the project was the power washing and staining of the ramps to the Ballentine School House, the Post Office Museum and to the Johnson Playhouse Museum.

This is one of the wonderful contributions from the citizens to our Fuquay-Varina Museums.



Daniel Rice was photographed as he asked us to sign off on his completed project.



One of the markers which will serve to educate the public about the trees and shrubs in the park.

The Byrd Collection

One of the well-known ladies from the past of Fuquay-Varina now has her papers and pictures archived in our Fuquay-Varina Museums. Kathleen Dennis Byrd served the town in a number of roles over her lifetime.

Married to William “Bill” Byrd, Kathleen lived in the house which has recently been demolished at the corner of Main and Ennis Streets. In her backyard (also now gone) she operated the small flower shop along with Mary Lee Johnson during two periods of her working life.



Kathleen with partner Ms. Mary Lee Johnson in her shop. Dean Photo, 1965

Kathleen was a loyal member of the Fuquay-Varina Woman’s Club, following in the footsteps of her mother-in-law, Mrs. Byrd. The older Mrs. Byrd and a number of her Flynn sisters were Charter Members of the original Varina Woman’s Club.

Kathleen was an avid member of the Credit Women International and the silver bowl awarded to her as Credit Woman of the Year in 1973 is now in the museum.

In 1961, she became hostess at the North Carolina Governor’s Mansion working with Governor Terry Sanford and Margaret Rose Sanford. Numerous school children in town will remember visiting the

mansion during her tenure there.



Kathleen and Terry Sanford, Junior at the mansion.

An earlier generation will remember Kathleen as the Selective Service agent who had offices upstairs in the Varina Hotel (now the Aviator Restaurant) during World War II. Young men whether being drafted or deferred, all passed through these quarters in that era.



Kathleen with Mrs. Sanford during her days as mansion hostess.

Still earlier, Kathleen worked in the Fuquay Springs Post Office when it was located back of Johnson's Drug Store (now The Mill). Several of the Dennis girls were employed in the post office over the years.

A rich collection of clippings, documents, and photographs related to Kathleen are ours as the gift of the estate of John Robert Byrd, son of Kathleen and Bill. Also, accessioned into the museums are documents and pictures from Speed Riggs who married another of the Dennis girls.

John Robert Bryd himself left the museums many artifacts and pictures from his ownership of ABJ Chevrolet in Angier.

This collection is a good example of the type of artifacts, documents, and pictures which we hope many families will consider donating to the Fuquay-Varina Museums so they may become part of our town's heritage.

Old Post Office Artifact Comes Home

A neighbor tells a neighbor and sometimes the word gets around to the right people! That's what happened with the Old Varina Post Office artifact the museums have been fortunate enough to recover. The piece will be displayed in the "Little Post Office" of Hattie Parker Jones, although it certainly does not come from that building.

Someone, an unidentified gentleman, cleaned out or helped clean out the last post office in Varina. The building was owned by Mrs. Annie Akins but the persons who cleaned out the materials inside have not been identified. Previously, the museums have asked the current post office to search for any artifacts left around and gotten no results. That is why this is a great find.

With a little luck, the daughter of a former post master, Sandra Johnson, knew Sidney Mann who grew up around the post office in Varina when it

was located in the buildings beside the Bank of Varina. Sandra's mother, Jewel Ballentine Stephens, became post mistress in Varina on September 18, 1934. Sydney remembers seeing the piece in the back of the post office and knows that the rural carrier used it to sort his mail before leaving on his route.

The person from whom we acquired the piece purchased it at a yard sale and intended to "do something with it." She has cleaned it up but fortunately some of the information on it is still intact.

As its latest use, the piece appears to have been used to sort mail for places in North Carolina as the names of various post offices are visible on some of the boxes. We would estimate the piece to have been used at least from the 1930's until the post office closed for ever in Varina.

The Friends are grateful to a generous benefactor, Marilyn Gardner, who donated to the museums for the purchase of this artifact.



One of the sorting labels for other post offices still intact would be our own Fuquay Springs post office. The Varina post office remained open for mail distribution until 1978.



The artifact as it now appears after cleaning. Each box is about the size of a legal size envelope.

Upcoming Museums Schedule

Monday mornings: 10-1

Wednesday afternoons: 1-4

May 4: Heritage Day 10:00-4:00

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.