
The Penderlean

Honoring the work and lives of the settlers of Penderlea, the first Depression era homestead project under the New Deal

Spring 2011, Volume 7

Homestead Day, June 11, 2011

Food, Fun and Fellowship at annual Homestead Day

On this day, 73 years ago, Eleanor Roosevelt visited Penderlea, first Depression era homestead project that held so much promise for America's farmers. She spoke of opportunity, she offered to help, and she danced like she'd been dancing to fiddle music all her life. When the "Gospel Lites" strike up the music for our annual Homestead Day on June 11, 2011, at the Penderlea Homestead Museum, Eleanor Roosevelt will surely be there in spirit! The music will begin around 10:30 a.m., followed by a delicious barbecue lunch catered by Parker's Barbecue of Rocky Point, NC. George Edwards, Director of the Historic Wilmington Foundation, will speak to the crowd about historic preservation in the Lower Cape Fear region; in particular, the recent citing of the Penderlea Hosiery Mill as an endangered historical structure to be placed on the Foundation's "watch list" (see Endangered Structures),

Raffle tickets will be on sale during the early part of the day for a deluxe gas grill to be awarded to the lucky winner of a drawing held as part of the program. Several of our Pender County commissioners and other dignitaries are expected to attend.

Tractor on Display

On display for the Homestead Day festivities will be a 1936 steel-wheeled Farmall F-20 tractor donated to the Museum by local businessman Jerry Murray. Murray, an entrepreneur and collector, said that the tractor is the type used to clear the land for the Penderlea project in the

1930's. The museum heartily thanks Mr. Murray for this generous donation.

New Wash House

For many of you, this will be your first opportunity to see the new wash house completed by our member building team last October. The wash house features public "facilities" formerly unavailable for gatherings such as Homestead Day. Please express your appreciation, especially to Al Owens, Bill Smith, Bob Smith, Michael Booth and Gene Cottle for their dedication throughout the heat of summer to complete this project.

New Board Members

The Penderlea Homestead Museum Board of Directors recently appointed 2 new Board members: Carl Hardison is a former barber and a local plumber from Watha who is very knowledgeable about the history of Penderlea, having worked on a lot of the properties on the project; Danny Denny is a lifetime member of the museum who owns a local landscaping business and has contributed much to the care and maintenance of the museum property. Another prospective board member, Colleen Griffiths, was introduced to us by UNCW professor Will Moore. Colleen recently completed her Masters Degree in History at the college. She is from Havelock, NC, and is interested in working with our archives and historic collections.

Other members of the Board of Directors are: Jimbo Robbins, Vice President; Patty Ebert, Treasurer; Allison Rankin, Recording Secretary;

Carolyn Booth, Corresponding Secretary; Ann Cottle, Curator; Michael Booth, Director; David Haase, Director; and Norman Wheeler, Director.

Al Owens recently handed in his resignation as President due to health reasons. A new President will be elected at the January 2012 board meeting when the 3-year tenure of Jimbo Robbins and Carolyn Booth will also be up. Owens has contributed significantly to the Museum since he came on board in 2003. He will be greatly missed. Thank you, Al!

Hosiery Mill on Endangered Structures “Watch” List



On May 23, The Historic Wilmington Foundation announced its 2011 list of Most Threatened Historic Places in Wilmington and the Cape Fear Region. The purpose of the foundations “most threatened” list is to focus attention on endangered sites and to illustrate the benefits of historic preservation. The list recognizes the regions irreplaceable, architectural, historic, natural and archaeological sites that face imminent threat by demolition, alteration, inappropriate development, insufficient funding, or neglect.

New to the “watch” list this year is the Penderlea Hosiery Mill completed in 1937. Both the mill and the Penderlea School were nominated for the Most Threatened list by the Penderlea Homestead Museum. The Foundation determined that the school which was also built in 1937 is presently in no imminent danger; however, the mill is up “for sale”. With no formal restrictions on a new owner, the future of the mill is uncertain.

The PHM Board of Directors is grateful to the Historic Wilmington Foundation for generating public attention to Penderlea’s

historic structures, hopefully attracting creative solutions. Media attention and public discussion also help people evaluate the importance of our heritage which is often as much about renewal as restoration. Appreciation also goes to Susan Robbins and Ann Cottle who prepared the nominations submitted to the Historic Wilmington Foundation.

Cookbooks Featured in Our State Magazine

“Recipes and Remembrances”, our very own collection of Penderlea Homestead recipes, compiled by Frances Murphy Love and Betty Murphy Klavins received a 4-page spread in the April 2011 issue of Our State Magazine. Diane Summerville, senior editor of the magazine, wrote the story, “284 Garden Road” featuring four recipes from the cookbook as well as a tribute to the Murphy family and other Penderlea settlers who shared life “on the project.” Al and Carrie Owens who handled mail order sales said sales soared to 50 or more cookbooks after publication of the story. “Recipes and Remembrances” will be on sale on Homestead Day and the Murphy girls will be on hand to sign your copy.

Also on sale will be copies of the “Penderlea Pageant” program reprinted from the original. The pageant play was performed by Penderlea residents to honor the visit of Eleanor Roosevelt on June 11, 1937. You’ll find the names of many of the early settlers and an entertaining description of the highly original skit.

National Register of Historic Places

After a brief delay during the winter months, our National Register of Historic Places nomination is moving forward again. Sidebottom Historical Consultants, LLC, has informed your board of directors that the digital survey files are in the hands of the NC State Historic Preservation Office. Once approved, the actual

nomination will be submitted to the Department of the Interior's National Register Advisory Committee. According to the State Historic Preservation Office's Acting Administrator and Architectural Survey Coordinator, Claudia Brown, submission to the National Register Advisory Committee is not likely before February 2012 because of the backlog of work.

NC Museums Council to Provide Free On-Site Consultation Service to PHM

Two experts from the NC Museums Council will spend two days at the Penderlea Homestead Museum in June reviewing records and artifacts to guide the museum in collections management and marketing/public relations. The Free On-site Consultation Service (FOCoS) is a program provided by the NC Museums Council to offer professional advice relating to needs as specified by the museum. Assisting our museum will be Carol Hunt Chamberlain, chief curator of NC State Historic Sites, and Jessica Orr, a consultant who has worked for the NC Arts Council as a marketing and public relations expert. We are most fortunate to have these services available to us.

Kudos to Allison Rankin

Please take a moment on Homestead Day to thank Allison Rankin, Recording Secretary, for her diligence in pursuing the application for the FOCoS program. Allison has also been instrumental in eliciting the help of UNCW History graduate, Colleen Griffiths, who brings along with her two volunteers, Shannon SanCartier and Jesse Bricker, both involved in preservation efforts in the greater Wilmington area. We are fortunate to have Allison's resourcefulness on our board of directors. Thank you, Allison!

Speaking of Support

Speaking of support, some of you have overlooked sending in your 2011 dues. We had a

wonderful response to our National Register Fund and the memorial drive last year. Many of you became lifetime members under the provision that memorials of \$250 or more carried lifetime membership. But if you did not reach for lifetime membership, we still need your support with regular dues. Family memberships are \$20 a year; Individual memberships are \$15 a year. Donations in any amount are most welcome.

At present, we have set aside the remaining funds to pay for our contract with Sidebottom Historical Consultants, LLC, but we have several other projects that are on hold. Director Michael Booth has developed an overall plan for the homestead that will include a chicken house, hog house, smoke house, a garden plot, and possibly an exhibition building. But our first priority is to rebuild/renovate Grey Murphy's dairy barn. You've seen the plans: they call for restoring the dairy equipment and include a kitchen that could be used for museum functions. It is not an elaborate plan, but it must be structurally sound and that not only requires a lot of hearts and hands, it will cost money. If you have some building expertise, your help will be needed when we start on the project. You can also help financially. Please use the enclosed envelope and make your checks payable to The Penderlea Homestead Museum. The museum is registered with the US Revenue service as a non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status. The museum's Federal ID number is 02-0696923.

For more information or to reprint copies of this newsletter, please go to our website: www.penderleahomesteadmuseum.org

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(See Membership List on reverse.)