PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC SITES
A Message from the President

The preservation of historic areas is now recognized as an essential part of city planning in a well balanced program for the future. Local protective zoning laws are being put into effect throughout the nation, and historic areas in nineteen cities are now protected by legislation on a higher level, assuring us that sections such as the Vieux Carré of New Orleans and Georgetown in Washington, D. C., will remain as valuable cultural contributions.

Wilmington citizens can remember many times when they have been angered and distressed by the ruthless sacrifice of beauty and historic values for the dubious advantage of so-called progress. They remember the unwarranted effort to destroy the century old City Hall and Thalian Hall in the Thirties. For years there have been constant and futile attempts to free South Third Street from the earth shaking rumble of oil tankers which threaten the very foundations of many of our best old houses and churches. The destruction of the old oaks occasioned by the traffic light installation at Seventeenth and Market Streets is green in memory. There are many more examples which emphasize the need of city planning.

In this city planning careful thought would be given to proper arteries of traffic, future bridge sites, and park and recreation areas. A truly good blueprint for the future, however, would include the preservation of Wilmington's charming old residential district, making it possible for its inhabitants to live without the constant threat of heavy industrial traffic and cheap commercial encroachment. It is good to know that Wilmington has a Redevelopment Commission under able leadership. We trust that our leaders will have the vision and energy necessary to encompass the problems of planning for cultural life as well.

Wilmington's colonial residential district has long been swallowed up by the downtown business section. However there still remains an area of dignified streets with many churches and dwellings dating from the decades just before and after the War Between the States. As we estimate the worthiness of these landmarks of preservation it is necessary to apply careful standards of judgment. Is a house to be called historic merely because it has stood long enough to be considered old? Is it imperative that a house conform to contemporary ideas of beauty? Is it necessary that a house have historical associations in order to save it from the wreckers?

Mr. Charles F. Montgomery, Director of The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum at Winterthur, Delaware, has written in the September, 1959, issue of Museum News an illuminating article which he calls "The Historic House—A Definition." In it he states there are various ways in which a house may be considered an historic document and defines four categories:

The biographical house
The house which is a shrine to a moment in history
The era house
The area house

The biographical house is one closely associated with an outstanding person or family and where many or all of the furnishings were their personal possessions. Such a house can have great interest regardless of its artistic merits. It may not be aesthetically pleasing, but as the authentic setting of a famous personality it can exert great fascination. Outstanding examples of this biographical house, now museums, are "Sagamore Hill," Theodore Roosevelt's home on Long Island, and "Sunny Side," Washington Irving's Hudson Valley mansion. One in this state, still a private residence, is "Hayes'" near Edenton, Samuel Johnston's home where the main rooms, with particular emphasis on the library, are preserved with his possessions as he left them.

The moment shrine is a house in which some one of great importance was born or died or where some dramatic moment in history occurred. In North Carolina, the Governor Ayeck Birthplace is a good example of the moment shrine.

The era house is representative of the particular atmosphere and aura of an epoch. The late-nineteenth century palaces of the wealthy, such as "Biltmore House," fall under this category, as would the careful restoration of the "Tryon Palace."

The area house conveys the way of life of a whole community through its architecture, furnishing, and decoration. The architecture exemplifies the building of a particular region and the decor illustrates the cultural achievement of its inhabitants. Wilmington is fortunate in its two museums which are splendid examples of the area house: the Burgwin-Wright house, Headquarters of the Colonial Dames in the State of North Carolina, and the Bellamy Mansion. Each of these houses combines qualities of the era house and the moment shrine as they each served as the residence and headquarters of a conquering general.

This interesting analysis of Mr. Montgomery's can serve as criteria for the evaluation and restoration of old houses. We can look around us and be surprised at the number of buildings which fall under one or more of these classifications. The fact that there are so many still standing in good condition in an area, though threatened, is still far from being beyond salvage, makes it important for members of the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society to work for city planning which would include protection and preservation of our older residential district. By applying Mr. Montgomery's definition we can without doubt call this the preservation of an historic area.

The Society looks forward to the evening of Friday, February 26, when we will have as our guest Mr. Werner K. Sensbach, formerly senior planner for the city of Columbia, South Carolina, who is now directing a planning program for Roanoke, Virginia. Mr. Sensbach will offer us the knowledge of his wide experience and the inspiration to help us achieve our goal.

—Henry Jay MacMillan
MEETING

Time and Place: February 26, 1960, at 8 P.M., at St. John’s Parish House, 831 Forest Hills Drive.

Speaker: Mr. Werner K. Sensbach, Director of City Planning, Roanoke, Va.

Topic: The Preservation of Historic Sites Through City Planning.

Mr. Werner K. Sensbach is a 36-year-old native of Germany, who received his degree as Master of Architecture from the Technical University of Karlsruhe in 1952. He worked in architectural offices in Switzerland, Germany, and New York State, and served his City Planning internships in Utica, N. Y. Mr. Sensbach spent six months in 1950 at the University of North Carolina as a City Planning Trainee under a program sponsored by the U. S. State Department, and he returned to the University for his Master of City Planning, which he received in 1959. He is a United States citizen.

SEARCH FOR OLD PORTRAITS

The Colonial Dames of North Carolina have instituted a search for portraits which were painted a hundred years ago or more. They are particularly interested in family portraits with Colonial provenance. Cold War will be recorded and, if possible, photographed. It has been pointed out that North Carolina is one of the few states that were once colonies where almost no cataloguing and photographing of old portraits has been done.

Anyone who has or knows of a canvas of this type is asked to call Mrs. Hugh Meachem at Colonial Dames Headquarters, 224 Market Street.

OLD LETTERS OF INTEREST

Mrs. S. C. Kelham, Society Archivist, has supplied the Bulletin with two letters, which she copied from the originals, and with the references concerning them.

A LETTER WRITTEN ON HORSEBACK

The following letter, written from William Calder to his mother, is a hitherto unpublished, eye-witness account of the Battle of Bentonville. It is among the Calder family records belonging to William Atkinson, as is the Boyd letter.

N. C. Junior Reserve March 23rd 1865

Dear Mother:

My last hurried note to you was written while awaiting orders to move on Saturday morning the 18th inst. We marched that day 14 miles to Bentonville. The next morning Sunday we marched down three miles and formed a line of battle. I know how much you have been racked by doubts and fears since this battle has been going on, but I trust you have been supported by faith in the good God who has brought us safely through all these dangers. My heart is overflowing with gratitude whenever I think upon my escape & His goodness to me & I feel how little I deserve all these blessings. I fervently pray that God may give me grace to lead such a life as may prove that His benefits have not been lost upon me. Sunday morning was occupied with building breastworks and occasional shelling from both sides. About the noon the enemy assaulted our line in front of Kirkland and Hagood, and were easily repulsed. Their effort was a feeble one. In the afternoon we remained camped on our right wing advanced upon the enemy in a gallant charge driving them from their first line of works and capturing

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THE GOOSE CREEK MEN

By Henry J. MacMillan

William Rhett and Landgrave Thomas Smith, and every one of the sons of Governor James Moore, except James, came to live on the Cape Fear. James later became South Carolina’s second Governor James Moore. While not mentioned by the Andrews’, another widely spreading Cape Fear family tree bears the names of Toomer, Watters, and Hyrne, and this one also stems from the South Carolina aristocracy.

As an instance of the intimate relationship of a group of families, we may take the Howes of Howe’s Point. Job Howe came from Barbados to South Carolina as deputy for the Governor apptiented by the Council of Carolina. He married Sarah, the widow of Edward Middleton, in 1680. She left two sons: Arthur Middleton of The Oaks, who as President of the Council was acting governor of South Carolina, and Robert Howe, who married Mary Moore. Mary was the daughter of Gov. James Moore I and the sister of Nathaniel, Col. Maurice, John, ”King” Roger, and Gov. James II. Arthur Middleton flourished to such an extent that he was able to give his son, William, the plantation Crowfield with the endowment to make it probably the finest estate in the colonies. His other son, Henry, came into possession of Middleton Place through marriage. As a large, formal, landscaped garden, Middleton is unique in its period and is generally regarded as the loveliest of its kind in this country. Job Howe had a son of his own, Robert and, on coming to the Cape Fear, married Martha, daughter of Chief Justice Frederick Jones, and lived at Howe’s Point. In this network of relationships we find that Job Howe II’s first cousin owned Middleton Place, his uncle owned Orton, and his aunt, Mrs. John Moore (who before her marriage was Justina Smith, daughter of Landgrave Thomas Smith) owned Pleasant Oaks. These three plantations are today among the great gardens of the South. How agreeable it is that we can thank the Goose Creek Men for the creation of beauty as well as for the love of individual freedom which we consider their major legacy! On June 14, 1734, Job Howe of Cape Fear and his wife Martha deeded to Thomas Clifford and Mary [this was his mother, Mary Moore Howe, who after Robert Howe’s death married Thomas Clifford] 340 acres in St. James Parish, Goose Creek, and their pew in St. James Goose Creek Church.

S. G. Stoney, in discussing the boroughs of Charleston, says that Rhett’sbury is land granted to William Rhett in 1714 and known as Point Plantation of Rhett’sbury. It was divided by his great-grand-daughters, Susannah and Mary Hasell, whose marriages to Parker Quince and John Archer were at one time commemorated in street names in Rhettsbury. It is interesting that these are all Cape Fear people who left their names on Charleston streets. Hasell Street still exists and is the location of some of Charleston’s notable houses; in fact, Col. William Rhett’s House is one of the old in the city, is at 54 Hasell Street. Other reminders of the connecting links are the Col. John Ashe House, 32 South Battery, and the John Ashe Alston House, 172 Tradd Street, built presumably by the son of William Alston and his wife Mary, daughter of General John Ashe.

The Goose Creek Men found kindred spirits in the men of Albemarle who had come to the southern part of North Carolina—Edward Moseley, the Swanns, the Joneses, and the Harnetts—and together they formed the powerful provincial party which was often at odds with the Royal government and which, when the time arrived, produced the leadership necessary for the final breach with the mother country. Their families had already been land holders and residents of the Carolinas for a century. To them the New Country was their homeland.

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2. Howe’s Point. The beautiful point of land on Middle Sound, facing the Sound to the east and Howe’s Creek to the south, was the seat of the Howe family and their descendants from the early 15th Century until after the Civil War. The Howe family cemetery is there. It is now the property of Mrs. Warren W. Bell.
4. Deed in the Berkeley County Records, South Carolina.
5. Samuel Gauld Stoney in the text of This is Charleston, p. 127.
OLD LETTERS—(Continued from Page 2)

several pieces of artillery. About the same time two brigades of our division were thrown forward against the enemy. The right had met a stubborn resistance and were at a standstill. Haggard and Col. Smith's brigades of our division had made an impression upon the enemy. Taylor's Batt. made one of the finest charges made that day and advanced to the breastworks of the enemy. They were not properly supported however, and had to fall back, after loosing nearly all their men. The loss in the battle was very heavy. Only four officers and seventy men are left. Lieut. Col. Taylor lost his left arm. Capt. Rankin I fear is mortally mortally wounded. Zack Ellis was left on the field killed or wounded. Brad Jewett is among the missing. When I reflect on how providentially I was spared from participation in this charge & how manifestly the hand of Providence has been handed out in my behalf, I am filled with awe and wonder, and every day I think more & more that I am being spared for some particular work, and I pray that God may point out this work to me & endow me with grace to do my duty well.

Others have been spared through many battles, but I know no case where the complexity of events has been so apparent & what at first seemed to be the worst thing that could happen to me has in the end proved my salvation. I have now the most implicit faith in God & shall have no fear wherever I may go.

On Monday & Tuesday we fought the enemy in a series of skirmishes, but no heavy fighting. The Juniors did remarkably well. Wednesday morning before day we fell back towards Smithfield and Sherman had left our front. Gregory is well. I witnessed with sadness the death of John Curtis & feel much sympathy for his bereaved family. Gregory sends his love. Roger is here on a visit & the Dr. is attached to the Brigade. My situation is very pleasant & I have much to be thankful for. I write in the last wounded. Zack Ellis was left on the field killed or wounded. Brad Jewett is among the missing. I think of you with deep affection.

Rob's of the 18th received yesterday. I will answer as soon as possible. Do write me as usual. It does not matter where you direct, the P.O. Dept sends all the letters to the Army.

Your affectionate son
Wm. Calder

PUBLISHER ADAM BOYD

The letter from Adam Boyd was addressed to Mrs. Toomer, and concerning this Mrs. Kellam notes: From Will Book A&B, page 15: "The Will of Mary Boyd, wife of Adam Boyd of Georgia, and former wife of Moses John deRosset. 1798." Mrs. Toomer, the wife of Henry Toomer, was the daughter of Mary Boyd and was Magdalene Mary deRosset.

The second newspaper in Wilmington, according to Waddell's History of New Hanover County, was published by Adam Boyd and named The Cape Fear Mercury. Copies of this paper as early as November, 1769 are on file in the State Archives in Raleigh. Waddell comments further (p. 199):

Adam Boyd deserves more than passing notice. He came to Wilmington from Pennsylvania prior to January, 1764, as appears from one of his letters, in which he says he was initiated in the Masonic lodge there in January, 1764; that Peter Mallett and Colonel DeKeyser were in the lodge with him, and that on St. John's Day, 1770, "at the dinner at Emmet's house, a little back from the street," he and Mr. London acted as stewards. He had been a Presbyterian licentiate, but not an ordained minister. He early joined the Continental Army, first as ensign, then became lieutenant and finally chaplain. At the close of the war he helped to organize the North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati at their first meeting at Hillsborough in October, 1783... In 1788 he was ordained a minister of the Episcopal church by Bishop Seabury and officiated for a short time at St. James Church in Wilmington, although not in the right vector. Dr. Boyd was a great sufferer from asthma, which was aggravated by the climate of Wilmington, and removed to Augusta, Ga., where he served as minister from 1790 to 1798, and died in Natchez, Miss., in 1803.

Augusta, Georgia 17th July 1789

My Dear Maggy,

I have long wished to return to see you, but never yet have had it in my power. If I thought I could live there with a tolerable degree of satisfaction I would go & end my days there, which I once hoped to do near the place of my nativity: but vain are the expectations of men with respect to this world. Therefore his grand business is to prepare for the next, in which he will meet with no disappointments, neither care approach him.

What is become of you all? I believe it is impossible to get letters conveyed regularly; and yet I think in all this time, some might have reached me.

Some evil spirit, or a fever, takes possession of my brain every night, that I cannot sleep, which has made me so stupid that I cannot write. I did intend to write to your mother—but time is past, and if I write in a hurry with my present confusion of brain, I may write unguardedly—I am extremely anxious about her having been heard that she has nearly lost the sight of her eyes. How is your dear Henry, is he grown fat again? How are the dear children? & all friends? I had much to say to you—but cannot now—God preserve you.

Adieu—Yours

What is become of A. Boyd

Armand John?

I have had no gout & but very little Asthma in this place, which made me wish to continue here, but Mary is... and division plenty. Besides I appear lost here separated from all my connections—I wish—My dear child, it were otherwise—but alas! I know not what to hope—for I hope, at least, that your mother is not afflicted with a total loss of sight. I wish I could see her, or hear from her so write on receipt of this.

I ask M. Willings to enclose it for you in his letter—

Once more Adieu.