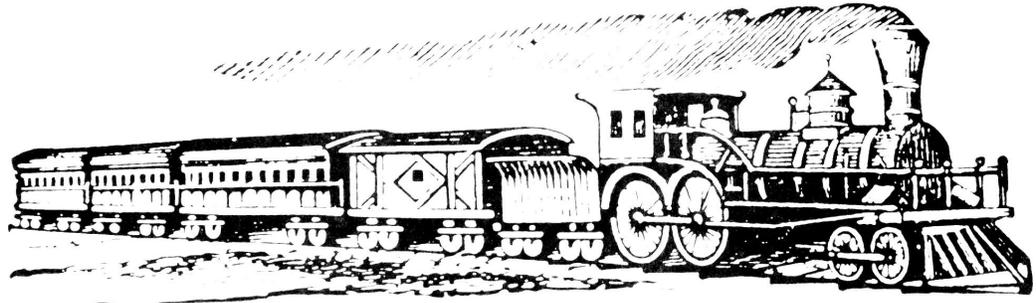


# The Dispatch

Apex Historical Society



The Newsletter of the Apex Historical Society

Apex, North Carolina

Apr -Sep 2020

## Coronavirus Hits the World

Snippets from Claire Rousseau's personal journal

### Day 1 Friday March 13, 2020

Our world has stopped. Coronavirus is spreading all over the world. Meetings cancelled, even basketball March madness stopped. Flights to and from Europe stopped. Grandsons Brass Band concert for Sunday stopped. Life is very odd. Stock market is way down. What next?

### Day 3 Sunday March 15, 2020

All has stopped – no church today, no school for two weeks. Coronavirus 2020 has hit the world.

### Day 4 Monday March 16, 2020

The world stops as we self quarantine for Coronavirus. Time to clean, ponder, read, garden and stay home. We say prayers for our country.

## Miss Edith's Classroom

by Molly Weston

As were most Southern children of my era, I was taught from an early age to call adult women "Miss" before their first name. Consequently, one of Mother's teacher friends was "Miss Edith." As was customary, downtown shopping was an opportunity for stopping on the downtown sidewalks to visit with nearly everyone we met. Being an

inveterate eavesdropper, I had no problem standing quietly beside Mother and any friend to listen to their conversations.

Miss Edith was one of my favorite subjects, partly because of her clipped speech pattern, partly because she was even shorter than Mother, so I could hear everything they said without straining.

I was delighted when I learned (the day before school started) that I'd be in her fourth grade class—and it would be a "combination" class of fourth and fifth grades. (More opportunities for eavesdropping!) I was less pleased that night when Mother told me I'd have to call Miss Edith "Miss Maynard" since she'd be my teacher, not Mother's friend.

The first day of class, however, all became well with my world. Miss Maynard would teach us to play the tonette and we could have a BAND, if we wanted. Everyone did! We'd need to bring \$1 each and she'd order them for us. We couldn't wait for their arrival.

Further, if we wanted to learn to knit or crochet, she'd teach us. Unsurprisingly, all the girls wanted to learn these crafts—and so did most of the boys. Soon a stream of excited



kids and their moms stormed the dime store (people from other areas probably would call it a five and ten) downtown and nearly decimated their stock of crochet hooks and knitting needles; fortunately there was plenty of yarn and thread. What none of the kids put together was this was actually a way to keep one class busy while she was teaching the individual grade curriculum to the other.

Another busy-work activity was an art project. She'd bought several lengths of plain fabric and a member of each grade drew mosaic patterns on two of them in black crayon. When we'd finished our in-class homework, we could color in a space. When we'd completed coloring both lengths, she had them framed and hung at the back of the classroom. The finished products were about eight feet by three feet. She left them on the walls for years.

Every afternoon when we returned from lunch, Miss Maynard would read a chapter or two from wonderful books—historical fiction, adventure, Uncle Wiggily, and more. We never realized we were learning and fostering our imagination; we were just mesmerized.

Then, one joyous day a delivery man entered the classroom bearing a large carton containing our tonettes! None of us expected to receive a songbook arranged just for children. The very next day a new musical component was added to our curriculum. Soon we had a full-fledged tonette band which performed at several school events.

Who knew we were learning with all these activities? Miss Edith certainly did!

Ed. Note: *Molly Weston is a charter member of AHS. She attended Apex schools and is a alumna of the class of 1963.*

## Coronavirus Journal - Continued

### Day 5 Tuesday March 17, 2020

Happy Saint Patrick's Day!

Most parades cancelled due to Covid.

Find the beautiful moments today. Hot coffee, homemade banana walnut bread, friends having "Happy Birthdays" on Facebook. We can visit on our computer screens. It is called

social media. Being thankful for food to eat and hot running water to wash my dishes and hands.

### Day 6 Wednesday March 18, 2020

49 degrees at 7:36 AM

Thankful a big bright golden sun peeks through the trees as we spend another day in quarantine. Restaurants now closed. Yet on this cold morning the birds sing "good morning spring."

### Day 7 Thursday March 19, 2020

Our Apex Historical Society Annual pot luck supper meeting has been cancelled due to this pandemic.

## News From our Website: apexhistoricalsociety.com

John Pearson, web master



I'd like to invite you to visit the Apex Historical Society website. Take a tour around the site and learn about the history of a small town once called "Log Pond" and later named Apex, and how it

has grown from a small rural village to a bustling urban community of over 50,000 and growing!

Discover the excitement of living in a thriving North Carolina community rich in history, shaped by its small town character and offering the best in residential living within a short distance of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Atlantic Ocean and major metropolitan destinations.

## Mission Statement

The Apex Historical Society is a non-profit, membership-supported organization dedicated to preserving, protecting and promoting the history of Apex, North Carolina.



## 2020 events and dates are subject to NC coronavirus guidelines

### Summer Ice Cream Social



**Canceled for 2020** - Our combined **Ice Cream Social and Membership Update** is scheduled for **Sunday, September 20th, 3:00-5:00 pm** at the Maynard-Pearson House.

### Peak-Tique Antiques & Collectibles Festival

**Canceled for 2020** - Friday-Saturday-Sunday, September 11-12-13, 2020. Show hours 9-5 Friday and Saturday, 10-4 Sunday.

The fourth annual Apex PEAK-TIQUE Antiques and Collectibles Festival is being organized and managed jointly by the Apex Downtown Business Association (ADBA), the Apex Historical Society (AHS) and the Town of Apex (TOA).

### 2020 Historic Homes Tour



**Canceled for 2020** - The 2020 home tour scheduled to be held Sunday afternoon, December 6th, 1:00-5:00

This is our part of the annual three day Apex community holiday event in early December.

### AHS - Halle Historical Presentations

**Canceled for 2020** - Free historical presentations at the *Halle Cultural Arts Center*. See our full calendar for all events.

These are *FREE* events provided by the Apex Historical Society and open to the public!

*Check back for news of additional presentations!*

## Coronavirus Journal - Continued

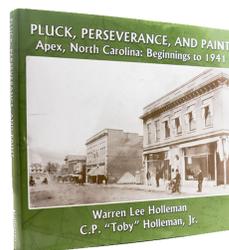
### Day 10 Sunday March 22, 2020

The new normal Sunday morning is to watch church on Facebook live stream on my home computer. Our backyard pond carries a sad looking yellow film from spring pine pollen, yet the birds still sing. Thank goodness that seems normal. Family is here for Sunday dinner at 6PM. No usual hugs for our greeting hello just elbow bumps. Wash hands and let's eat and be thankful.

My TV advertises today's special NCAA Final four basketball ~ "Watch Classic Basketball" ~ as they fill up the TV time with old final four games. We can't move forward in our quarantine, so we look back.

### Chapter 9 - Staying Alive in 1918

Warren and Toby Holleman, in their book "*Pluck, Perseverance and Paint*" help us look back.



This chapter takes a look at the influenza outbreak of 1918, also known as the Spanish flu. If you are interested in Apex history, this book is a "must read." It is available at Mack

Thorpe's Rusty Bucket on Salem St., Apex.

## Coronavirus Journal - Continued

### Day 51 Saturday May 2, 2020

Today is a beautiful sunny day. Sad to say, the Apex Peak Fest has been cancelled, as well as has our plant sale. We watch the governor give reports on TV almost daily. We continue to isolate. We heed the three 'W's: Wear a mask, Watch your distance, Wash your hands. We grow weary. We pray for the safety of essential workers.

## AHS Plant Sale Report

By Diane Long

This year's plant sale got delayed until June 6 due to Covid regulations.

We found a way to have it by spacing the plants all around our Maynard Pearson House yard.



It was the most exciting one I've participated in for the Society. Our treasurer John Messler and I discussed how we thought no one or just a few people would come. On June 6<sup>th</sup> at 8AM the back yard was filled with people coming to shop. Their response to our plant sale was outstanding! People seemed happy to get out of their houses. At the end of the sale, we had the least amount of plants leftover to take home in over twenty years.



Michael Lawrence helped me bring the plants to the MP House which was a tremendous help and his wife Margaret invited customers to join our society. Erin Thompson and John Pearson placed our ad on Facebook and the

society web page. We netted \$1036. on our 2020 Plant Sale, the best sale ever.

Thank you everyone who participated by buying or donating plants and making this years plant sale a huge green success.

## Thanks Apex Garden Club



The Apex Garden Club plants and maintains beautiful flowers at the Apex Depot Secret Garden and the planters in front of our red caboose. The Apex Historical Society maintains the caboose and works in fellowship with the Apex Garden Club to make a pleasing positive impression for the Town of Apex.



Thank you very much President Laraine Behnke and your Apex gardeners for your continued work and support. We love what you've done to enliven the caboose area.

## Coronavirus Journal - Continued

### Day 127 Friday July 17, 2020

The sun is up and getting hotter and hotter. Summertime, vacation trips cancelled, and Independence day event is limited to drive-by greetings. School is out for the summer, but summer camps have been shut down. Our world has become limited to a 15-inch computer screen and social media. We've learned to 'zoom' to meetings. No eating out. Even grocery shopping has been curtailed. Shopping for other stuff is done on Amazon, to be delivered by UPS. Life seems surreal.

### Our Halle Cultural Center Window Display

Thanks go out to Diane Long and Laverne Seagroves for their work putting this tobacco display window together. Tobacco barns once numbered a half million and were fixtures on farms across the state.



Today, only about 50,000 still stand, vestiges of the tobacco industry, deteriorating reminders of the leaves' influence on our culture.

The history of tobacco barns is explored in 'Our State Magazine.'

<https://www.ourstate.com/tobacco-barns-in-north-carolina/>

In the 1950s, half a million tobacco barns in North Carolina dotted their tobacco belts: Old Bright Belt, Middle Belt, Border Belt, New Bright Belt, and Burley Belt. Most barns were tall, plain, 20-foot-by-20-foot square buildings built of hewn logs and mortar, or sawn timber reinforced with tin. Or, "whatever the dollar would buy to get the job done," says Bill Monk, an 86-year-old retired tobacco executive whose family business, A. C. Monk & Company, in Farmville, processed tobacco. Its evolution from family-owned to Monk-Austin to DIMON to its current incarnation as Alliance One mirrors the history of North Carolina tobacco, from family acreage to industrialized crop.

"Here in North Carolina, most tobacco barns were far and away for flue-cured tobacco," Monk says. Flue-cured tobacco gets its name from the drying process: outside the barn, a narrow, inverted U-shaped furnace about two feet across and three feet high was fed pine logs to generate smoke.



Drawn by the chimney, indirect heat was distributed throughout the barn via ductwork that crisscrossed the dirt floor. Huge, hinged shutters on the sides or roof were opened and closed with ropes and pulleys to regulate the temperature within the barn. In just a few days, a leaf can lose 80 percent of its weight; in the first two weeks of the curing process, an acre of hanging tobacco sheds nearly five tons of water.

But no North Carolinian should be unaware of tobacco's importance to our state's history, culture, and economics; tobacco was the

golden leaf that built cities and universities and sustained thousands upon thousands of Tar Heel families.

Barn locations may look random, but in fact were carefully considered for efficiency, namely proximity to human labor and mule-drawn carts when the “cropping,” or harvesting, was underway.

Workers, often women, standing in the open-air tying shed adjacent to the barn, pulling cotton twine from a spool to skillfully string the three aligned stems, or “hands,” of leaves to a one-inch-square, six-foot-long tobacco stick. Workers loaded the sticks on a V-shaped structure, then passed it person to person inside the barn, where someone straddled a network of parallel, horizontal rafters, or “tiers,” strategically placed so the sticks would fit between them. Hence the tall, narrow shape of the barn. One by one, the laden sticks were positioned across the tiers, leaf stems tied to the stick, leaf tips pointing downward. “Whole families were involved, including children.” When the barn was full, loaded from the ceiling to the floor, the furnace was stoked with pine logs that had been cut from elsewhere on the farm during the winter in preparation for this season. Later, fuel oil was burned in heaters inside the barns, and still later, propane. “Fire was a perpetual threat. Smoke, ashes, and cinders were present round the clock. While often built close together, the barns were deliberately located far enough apart to reduce the risk of fire.”

*Photo by Jay Sinclair, Our State Magazine.*



During the three stages of curing, about six days total, temperatures in the barn would climb steadily upward, from 120 degrees to 135 to 160, finally topping out at 180 degrees — and in the hottest part of the summer. Mercury thermometers hung in the barn and outside it, as well. Every day, touch and appearance of the hanging leaves dictated the grower’s decision as to the interior temperature. Rain, or days with high humidity, slowed the curing, and the farmer would adjust the controlled temperatures accordingly. The leaves must be dry, but still pliable; too brittle and they would shatter.

At the end of the drying process, the sticks were brought down one by one from the tiers, just as they’d gone in, untied, and loaded onto carts to be hauled to the pack house — perhaps an unused home or building on the farm — to await sale at auction. The tobacco barns would stand empty and unused — and unlovely — until the next season.

Bulk curing and mechanization eventually rendered the barns obsolete. International clients would come to visit to view the new process. It was a sad thing to ride through the tobacco belt and see these dilapidated, deteriorating barns in the fields. The mule barns were obsolete as well, and the tying sheds. It was shameful, those sights. Yet I understood. Why would a farmer take down a barn that he had no use for anymore? That money could be better spent elsewhere.”

Ultimately, the structures were abandoned, being of flimsy construction and unsuitable for any other use. They now dot the countryside as reminders of the day when tobacco was king in North Carolina. Today, a generous estimate puts the number of North Carolina tobacco barns still standing at 50,000.

*Adapted from "The History of Tobacco Barns in North Carolina" by Susan Stafford Kelly*

## In Memoriam

### Jeanne Sutton Hack

**b. October 14, 1928 ~ d. April 12, 2020**

We are sad to learn of Charter Member Jeanne Sutton Hack's passing on Easter Sunday,



April 12, 2020. She was a lifelong citizen of Apex and served our Historical Society throughout our 33 year history. She helped our newly formed group find meeting space at the Apex Methodist

Church hall where we held our monthly meetings for several years.

She helped with the annual Home Tour and most recently worked at the candy shoppe sales table at the Maynard Pearson House. She was always enthusiastic and encouraging to our mission. She will be missed.

*Jeanne Hack at our 25<sup>th</sup> AHS Anniversary celebration at the Halle Center.*

### Ruth P Kulp

**b. January 7, 1928 ~ d. April 8, 2020**

Our condolences to the family of Ruth P Kulp. She was a transplant from New Jersey about



1992. She came to Apex and joined right in making it her new home. She volunteered helping us with Home Tour with her daughter Carol Weichel and became a member and supporter of our historical society. She

lived a long life enjoying people and being a part of her community. She was a great role model. Rest in peace.

### Dr Robert "Phil" Upchurch

**b. February 9, 1928 ~ d. May 27, 2020**

We mourn the passing of Apex Historical Society member Phil Upchurch, born in Wake County, Doctor of Plant Physiology at NC State, who visited our society for awhile



before returning to his home in St Louis MO. I know him from his Upchurch and Allied Families Association Newsletter. His legacy is he successfully reunited many Upchurch families throughout

the country and his newsletter continues and membership grows.

A job well done.

\*Note these three Apex Historical Society members were all born in 1928

## Coronavirus Journal - Continued

### Day 193 Tuesday September 22, 2020

Welcome First Day of Fall with 44 degrees temperature at 7AM. Yes we are still living in Covid Time. Our grandchildren go to school at home in Virtual Academy style that is sitting at their computers all day. Each class is a Zoom Room. One day my grandson's middle school teacher appeared on the screen but left the "room" for half an hour so the students actually got to talk together and get to know each other. Oh my, school is so different now, but children still want friends to talk with and to feel part of the experience we call school as in Molly Weston's school story.

We watched Governor Roy Cooper on TV at 2:00 PM today. He told us stadium type venues can go to 75% capacity for sports games and concerts. We also were told by Dr Mandy Cohen about the new exposure tracking app one can install for free on one's cell phone. It's called "SlowCOVIDNC" and will let you know if your cell phone comes near a cell phone who's owner has tested positive for Covid 19 within the past 21 days.

**...And in conclusion**

We have travelled a long anxious new road together in America. The new American experience we call it. I read over my journals and can't believe we are still stuck at home. We wait with hope.



**HS 2020-21 Board Members:**

- Jeff Hastings ..... AHS Board President
- Jeremy Bradham AHS Board Vice President
- Erin Thompson .... AHS Board Co-Secretary
- Diane Long ..... AHS Board Co-Secretary
- John Messler ..... AHS Board Treasurer
- John Pearson ..... AHS Board Member
- Margaret Lawrence .... AHS Board Member
- Michael Lawrence..... AHS Board Member
- Laverne Seagroves..... AHS Board Member



**AHS - Board Member Openings**

The Society often has opportunities to serve on both the **AHS Board** and the **Maynard-Pearson House Trust** to help with preservation of local history and to plan social and lecture activities for the local community.

The **MPH Trust** owns the property and handles maintenance and upkeep and the **Board** plans events and conducts tours of the House and offers presentations to community and school groups about local history. Please contact us if you would like to join either of these groups and help continue these activities!

**AHS - Board Member Meetings**

AHS board meetings will continue when possible through 2020. See our calendar for dates and times of meetings. Board meetings are always open to the public. Please join us to learn more about the society and consider joining or becoming a board member. Please leave a message on our facebook page if you have an interest.



In memory of our founder and inspiration, Jan Brooks, we will publish the Oct/Nov/Dec issue with photos of early home tours.

Edited by  
William A and Claire M Rousseau.  
Charter Members