

D i s p a t c h

AHS Annual Picnic

By Mary Petersen

The Apex Historical Society held its Annual Fall Picnic at the Maynard-Pearson House on Saturday, October 11, from 3-5pm. The AHS provided BBQ, and the members brought all types of delicious foods.

It was a wonderful gathering of members, many who hadn't seen each other in awhile. These events always provide a wonderful opportunity to catch up with old and new friends. Please consider coming to our next event which will be the Soup and Pie Supper in early 2009.

Thank you to everyone who attended the Annual Picnic and brought such tasty treats – the dessert table was overwhelming this year!



Thank You Note

Thanks to all who sent us the great food from the 2008 picnic and to Henry and Nancy Brown for delivering it. June is continuing her recovery from the recent two surgeries on her knee (and that on top of having a stent added recently). Unfortunately, we were not able to participate in the picnic but will get back into AHS activities as soon as she gets to where we can get out!

June and John Pearson



Up Coming Events

Sunday, December 8, 2008, 1:00 p.m. – 5 p.m., AHS's Annual Homes Tour
Thursday, January 15, 2009, 6:30 p.m., Society's Annual Soup and Pie Supper at M-PH
Thursday, March 19, 2009, 6:30 p.m., Society's Annual Membership Meeting at M-PH

51st Annual NC APAA Conference

By Debbie Douglass and Judy Miles

The North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association (NC APA) held its 51st annual conference at the new Raleigh Convention Center September 24-26, 2008. The Town of Apex arranged to have a four-hour mobile class entitled Economic Development and Historic Preservation in Apex showcasing Apex's central business district and asked the Apex Historical Society to be involved.

Tour Leaders and Speakers:

- Debbie Douglass and Judy Mills of the Apex Historical Society
- David Rowland, former Apex Planning Director
- Lauren Simmons, Apex Town Planner
- J. C. Knowles, Marketing Director for the Apex Downtown Business Association
- Gary Roth, President and CEO of Capital Area Preservation

Those speaking include David Rowland, former Apex planning director; J.C. Knowles, the marketing director for the Apex Downtown Business Association; Debbie Douglas and Judy Mills of the Apex Historical Society; and representatives from the Capital Area Preservation, the preservation partner with the Town of Apex.

The tour of Apex showcased Apex's central business district. Participants learned about historic preservation and economic revitalization tools that this small town has used to bring back its downtown business district and surrounding residential neighborhoods. The tour included a discussion of the history of Apex as participants walked through the historic central business district. You then heard from Apex planners about the public and private partnerships that have helped revitalize the downtown area. The emphasis of the tour was on using and protecting historic resources while moving forward into the 21st century.

Approximately 10 planners participated on the tour during a very rainy Friday morning. Debbie Douglass discussed the history of Apex and the significance of some of the historical buildings, as David Rowland and Gary Roth shared about the development and the historical preservation of the downtown buildings and homes.

The town planners, along with Gary Roth of Capital Area Preservation and Lauren Simmons (an Apex planner) were welcomed to the Maynard-Pearson House by Shirley Beasley, Buddy Holland, and Judy Miles. Judy gave a tour of the home while Buddy and Shirley answered questions about the restoration of the home.

Gary Roth and Lauren Simms remained after the group left. They had many good things to say about the home and felt it was good to have it as part of the tour.

The Dispatch...

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Home Tour

By Judy Miles

Preparations for the Apex Historical Society's 2008 Annual Home Tour are being finalized. The tour will take place on Sunday, December 7, 2008, from 1-5 p.m. Tickets are \$10 dollars if purchased before the tour date and \$12 on the day of the tour. Tickets will be on sale at participating merchants on Salem Street the first part of November.

This year the society will present three homes, the historic depot, and the Maynard-Pearson House for the tour. Diane Long has chosen the homes of Linda & Tom Colhoun at 1490 N. Salem St.; Teresa & Kent Fussell at 734 Culvert St.; and Texanne & Harvey Montague at 10305 Penny Rd.. The Maynard-Pearson House, home of the historical society, will be beautifully decorated and will be the site of our very popular Sweet Shoppe.

We need the help of everyone in the society if our tour is to be successful. If you don't have a task, give me a call 363-3268.



Sweet Shoppe for the Annual Home Tour

By Mary Petersen
363-4817

I will be at the M-PH on the morning of Saturday, December 6th, weighing and bagging all the candy. I would appreciate it if you could drop off your candy donations at the M-PH during this time. Or, please call me if you need me to pick up the candy from your home. Please drop me an email or give me a phone call and let me know what you will be bringing.



Apex Historical Society Oral History Project Update

By Mary Petersen

The Apex Historical Society Web Committee has been hard at work finishing up our handbook for the Oral History Project we are undertaking. In January 2009, we will begin interviewing residents of Apex and documenting their recollections and stories of life in Apex.

When completed, this project will be a lasting memoir of the history of Apex. In preparation for our interviews, we are looking for volunteers to help us with this project. We will need AHS members to be interviewers, transcribers, and committee chairs. No donation of your time is too small – we will find a job that is appropriate for your skills and time commitment! Please contact a member of the Web Committee if you are interested in joining our team and working on this worthwhile project.

Committee Members: Mack Thorpe, Mary Petersen, John Pearson, and Molly Weston.

End of an Era for the Old Oak Tree

By John Pearson
October 2008

On a cloudy day, while preparing to hold an AHS website committee meeting (September 10, 2008), the Town of Apex utility crew drove to the Maynard-Pearson House to take down the front most oak tree by the wooden sidewalk. The crew had driven out to the House in response to a request for removal of one of the original trees that was dying and becoming a safety hazard.

The oak tree closest to Olive Chapel Road had been in the process of dying for several years. An arborist examined the tree some time back and treated it for an infestation that had been killing parts of the tree. The Town of Apex crew had also recently pruned dead limbs from the tree in an effort to stop it from dying and to promote new growth, but the tree continued to decline. Members of the M-P House Trust Board had talked about the need for removing the tree to eliminate a safety issue on the property. The tree's root system was dying, and the only remaining choice was to take the tree down. Bill Sutton, one of our Board members, contacted Bruce Radford, Town Manager for Apex, to seek help with removal of the tree. Bruce contacted Judy Miles and offered the Town's support by cutting down the tree, and so began the tree removal process.

I was standing out front looking at the tree on that September morning, waiting for the Website Committee members (Mack Thorpe, Molly Weston, Mary Petersen, and me) and was wondering how much time it had left to stand majestically in front of the house. I thought back to a time in my teenage days about pulling my lawn mower behind my bicycle all the way from Center Street out to the M-P House to mow the grass under these trees for my uncle, Dr. Paul Pearson. He was the last Pearson family member to live in the house before it became the home of the Society after his demise. The stand of oak and pecan trees had been there for most of the lives of the family members who had lived in the house.

As I stood there taking a few photos, the Town crew appeared as they drove slowly out from town, stopping occasionally just up the road to figure out where they should park and if they were at the right place. After making a slow pass by the house, they turned around and returned to stop right by the tree at the curb. After the three crew members got out and studied the tree for a while, they placed a great circle of orange cones along the road, across the sidewalk, and at the house, then stood for a while longer studying the tree to see where to begin and how to cut away the large limbs and lower them to the ground.

When the crew completed their study of the tree, a little rain began to fall as if trying to stop them from the task. Two of the men stood by the truck holding a long rope wrapped around the tree trunk and extending to one of the top limbs. The third man lifted himself up into the top of the tree in a cherry-picker bucket and started methodically cutting off parts of the tree. The crew labored away for over two hours while we conducted our meeting inside the house, and when we left they were still sawing limbs and dropping them to the ground in the rain. By mid-day they had dropped most of the limbs and were feeding them into the grinder attached to their truck.

Mack and I both took a few photos to document the event and capture a memory of the great white oak tree that had stood in front of the house for some hundred years or so. Historical records indicate the pecan trees at the House were given by Governor Charles Brantley Aycock to John Phineous Pearson while he was serving in the NC House of Representatives in 1901. The oak and pecan trees provided a source of pecans and acorns for over a hundred years.

This September day brought a moment of sadness, the day they came to take down the big oak tree.



Apex

Historical Raleigh (enlarged and revised edition)
With Sketches of Wake County (from 1771)
And Its Important Towns
Descriptive, Biographical, Educational, Industrial, Religious, Illustrated
By Moses N. Amis – 1913

The town of Apex had its beginning with the close of the Civil War. Among its first settlers were J. McC. Ellington, H. C. Olive, Q. I. Hudson, W. F. Utley, W. H. Harward, Brinkley Olive, A. N. Betts and others, who contributed to its life in the beginning and afterwards. It was incorporated by the Legislature of 1871-'72, with the late Hon. H. C. Olive as its first mayor. It derived its name from being the highest point on the survey of the Raleigh & Augusta Air Line Railroad.

Until 1905 it was but a small town, where the standard of virtue, intelligence and patriotism was high, but where little progress in material things had been made. In that year, beginning with the organization of a bank and the establishment of a tobacco market, began a new life for the town and surrounding community. Fire later destroying a number of unsightly frame buildings, the first brick structure was soon erected. Again, in June, 1911, nearly all the remaining old frame buildings in the business section were also consumed by fire. Now the principal street of the town (Salem) is lined with handsome pressed-brick-front stores. Business houses have continued to increase in number, until now nearly everything to complete a small city is here represented. This metropolis of western Wake is one of the busiest, most attractive and substantially built towns of its size in North Carolina. Its streets are well laid out and splendidly shaded in the residential sections, while the business part of the town is marked with buildings of beautiful architectural designs and substantial construction.

Apex has a population of about one thousand, and, being located in the centre of one of the best agricultural sections of the State, has a large rural territory from which to draw life and sustenance. It is in the limited "Old Belt" tobacco¹ lands of North Carolina and Virginia, which produce the finest yellow-wrapper tobacco. The tobacco market at Apex is one of its chief industries. It is equipped with two splendid warehouses, three large prizehouses², markets about two million pounds of tobacco annually, and enjoys the distinction of making the highest average price per pound of any market in the State. It is the centre of a fine cotton-production section, the receipts of this staple being from three to five thousand bales of cotton per year.

Apex has splendid railroad facilities, being located on the main line of the great Seaboard Air Line Railway system and on the Durham & Southern Railway, the latter being the finest independent railway property in the State. It is also on the line of the Yadkin River Power Company, from which presently will come light and power to light the town and provide electrical power for the manufacturing plants which are certain to come.

Apex is a community which may well be proud of its intellectual and moral status

¹ http://home.att.net/~tobacco/flue_cured.htm –

Flue Cured Varieties: "Bright Leaf (or Virginia) Tobacco" Types 11, 12, 13, 14.

Grown and flue-cured for cigarettes, pipe and chewing tobacco. Leaves are harvested by priming. Priming entails the picking of individual leaves as they ripen. Flue-Curing is performed in small, tightly constructed barns with artificial heat beginning at 90°F and ending around 170°F; it takes 5 to 7 days. The name comes from the metal flue used in the heating apparatus. Flue-cured tobacco is yellow ('bright') to reddish-orange in color, thin to medium in body and mild in flavor possessing a sweet aroma and slightly acidic taste. It is high in sugar content and low-to-average in nitrogenous materials, acids and nicotine. It blends well with burley and Maryland tobaccos because its sugar content smoothes and neutralizes the smoke.

Type 11. That type of flue-cured tobacco commonly known as Western Flue-cured or Old Belt and Middle Belt Flue-cured, produced principally in the Piedmont sections of Virginia and North Carolina and the district extending eastward to the coastal plains region. That portion of this type known as Old Belt Flue-cured, normally characterized by a heavier body and darker color shade and produced principally in the Piedmont sections of Virginia and North Carolina, may be classified as Type 11a; and that portion of the type known as Middle Belt Flue-cured, normally characterized by a thinner body and lighter color shade and produced principally in a section lying between the Piedmont and coastal plains regions of Virginia and North Carolina, may be classified as Type 11b.

² This is where tobacco was sorted by grade before shipping.

Public education in Wake County has always found some of its most potent advocates and influences at Apex. Notable among those who have wielded an influence throughout the county in this respect are the late Hon H. C. Olive, State Senator and for many years chairman of the Wake County Board of Education; Hon. L. J. Sears, at present, and for many years past, chairman of the same board, and Hon. Percy J. Olive, an ex-representative and a public man who has taken an especial interest in the schools. That these gentlemen are and were but the exponents of the sentiment around them is witnessed by the fact that Apex has one of the finest and best-equipped schools in the county, and that every school in White Oak Township levies a local tax to supplement the general education fund.

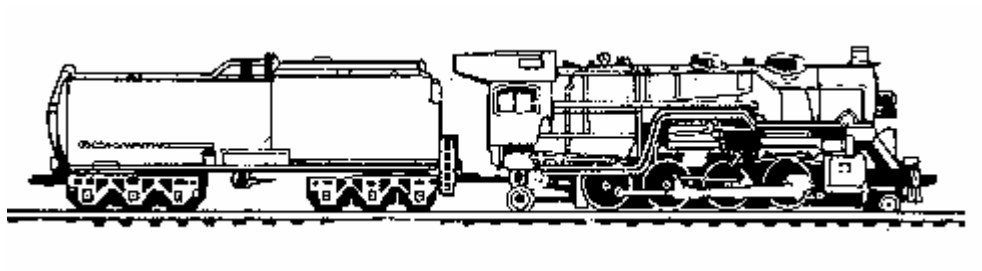
Civic progressiveness is evidenced by a handsome municipal building, just erected, and paved streets—the result of a bond issue voted by the people.

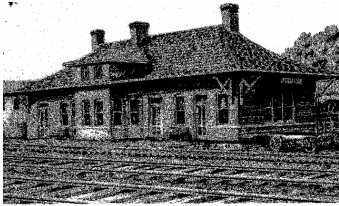
The religious and moral status of the town is indicated by the splendid new Baptist Church just being completed, at a cost of between twelve and fifteen thousand dollars. The Methodists and the Presbyterians each have imposing and commodious edifices. Several fraternal orders have lodges here, which find enthusiastic support.

The financial backing of Apex and community is most ample; there are two banks and an incorporated insurance and real-estate agency.

As a trading mart and mercantile centre the town has grown to city proportions within the past few years. Every line is represented. Its stores, in their handsome buildings, beautiful fixtures and up-to-date stocks, would do credit to any city in the State. Here, as elsewhere, the day of the general store is passing, and the store with the special line is taking its place.

Few communities in the State have had more additions to their population within the past five years than has that of which Apex is the centre. Those seeking desirable homes have found here a happy combination of advantages—fine lands, intelligent, virtuous and hospitable neighbors, good markets, good roads, good schools and good churches. No fictitious values have been placed upon the lands; for, with the true idea of progress, the efforts of those who have done most for the community's upbuilding have been directed to keeping the real estate at its true value. Contributing mostly to this and at present forming the most valuable of its citizenship, without disparagement to others, may be mentioned Messrs. W. F. Utley, W. H. Harward, A. B. Hunter, L. S. Olive, Percy J. Olive, Dr. W. Wade Olive, S. W. Stone, J. B. Mason, J. W. Lassiter, W. B. Upchurch, J. H. Sears, A. V. Baucom, A. C. Hughes, C. P. Sellars, W. B. Johnson, A. D. Upchurch, Samuel Watkins, Jr., A. T. Seymour, C. R. Weaver, S. T. Bennett, B. H. Pate, J. R. Cunningham, S. V. Hudson, S. S. Rogers, J. R. Norris, G. C. Norris, R. J. Bolling, Dr. R. W. Stephens, Dr. R. W. Johnson, Dr. C. B. Wilkerson, J. F. Mills, S. A. Branch, W. H. F. Branch, L. J. Sears, M. G. Upchurch, G. E. Upchurch, H. B. Harward, J. R. Harward, R. L. Bagley, J. C. Burns, Q. I. Hudson and others.





Apex Depot

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