



# SPOTLIGHT

COATS HERITAGE & COTTON MUSEUMS

FALL 2024, VOL . 1, NO. 2

Our **GREETINGS** go to you from the Coats Museum Board of Directors and museum volunteers. Welcome to our FALL newsletter where we will share a bit of what has been happening since our SUMMER issue. We welcome four new members to our board of directors, and we are so excited to welcome them. First, however, we want to THANK our awesome 2024 team who served so faithfully for three years. You have attended the board meetings, participated in our museum sponsored events, have shared artifacts, have opened your checkbooks and have made wonderful suggestions on how to make the museum a place that others want to visit more than one time. You are so appreciated-- Linda Cobb, Ralph Denning, Hilda Pope and Gayle Sorrell. Your FAITHFULNESS has made a difference at the museum for three years.

Now we welcome on board our four new members: Brandon Davies, Conrey Flowers, Misty Gil, and Betty Wolf who will serve until 2027. You come highly recommended. During your term, you will join current board members- Myrtle Bridges, Chris Coats, Peggy Robinson, Randy Stephenson, David Barnes, Wallace Pollard, Brenda Rhiner and Walter Weeks.

We also have some other important folks around the museum on Sunday afternoons to give tours if someone drops in. They are Lynda Butler, Linda Cobb, Eric Fann, Sandra Howard, Gayle Sorrell and Rhonda Stephenson. We recognize and thank those who serve to keep

the museum running smoothly in leadership roles: Chairman Andy Cole, Vice Chairman Lenny Parker, Treasurer Robie Butler and Secretary Becky Adams and Lawn Care Manager Jack Johnson.

All these folks along with countless donors and lenders of artifacts and financial supporters, we are so proud to share that the Daily Record's BEST OF HARNETT COUNTY has recognized the Coats Museum as the recipient of the Silver Award in the Non-Profit category. We had no idea!

A few **HAPPENINGS** since the SUMMER newsletter:

Vice Chairman Lenny Parker continues to head up the once a monthly meeting of board members to help maintain the museums and grounds while developing camaraderie with other museum folks.

- The front porch to the Heritage Museum has been repaired and painted by Lenny Parker, Walter Weeks, Randy Stephenson and Robie Butler.
- The latest recognition brick for the Walk of Ages have arrived.
- Lenny has power washed the fountain and sprayed for weeds at the museum.
- Amazing NUMBERS- A visit from Jan Pender, Donor Engagement Officer from the North Carolina Community Foundation in Raleigh, shared how much the museum's endowment fund balance has grown. Since the

establishment date in 2006, 774 Memorials and 153 Honorariums have been given to the Coats Museum Endowment.

- A visit to the coatsmuseum.com-under "Funding" will show the individuals who have been honored or memorialized with money donations to the Coats Museum and to the Coats Museum Endowment since 2006.
- Our largest group tours this summer were the Green Whittington Family Reunion and the Coats Hall of Fame visitors
- We look forward to meeting with a group from the Erwin Museum Historical Society to share our journey from a two-room school museum to a Museum Theater, Research Library, an Exhibit Hall and a Cotton Museum.
- Museum Volunteers will speak to a group at the Coats Public Library on September 23.
- Volunteers will continue to collect info on original houses in the Grove-Coats area.
- The Coats Town Board approved for the museum to place an exhibit cabinet in the Municipal Building.

#### **In 2024: January-August**

\* 850 visitors have signed the register from 27 towns, 8 states, and Australia. As always some came for tours, reunions and meetings while others came for research or to just visit. Virtual tours and face book groups have a large following. Since we get information requests as far away as St. Louis, MO, we know our coatsmuseum.com is visited by many from distant points.

\* Seldom does a week go by that the museum is not visited by someone bringing an artifact to be added to the museum's collections.

\* Here are just a few of the thousands of items that have found a home in the Coats Museum: the CSA Fife played by Rufus Beasley in the march of the Black River Tigers from Averagesboro to Bentonville from the Owen Beasley heirs, the loomed plantation blanket made by Civil Ford Ennis of South Carolina who was mother of Mollie Ennis Stewart-owner of the old Stewart Hotel and of Mattie Suggs- the midwife of the Oakdale-Bailey's Crossroads area and whose granddaughters donated Mattie's midwife instruments; a pair of sheep shears which look identical to those from Biblical times; from Joe Tart, a piece of the crashed airplane that took the life of our own Alton Stewart - the first license pilot in NC; a replica of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC given to us by Mike Tocci; a miner's head lamp loaned by Jimmie Byrd; a pump organ loaned by Hilda Pope; Earl Denning's Yellow Jacket suit loaned by his children-Trace, Denise and Dina, the Harnett County Game Warden hat of Jeff Turlington loaned by JoAnne Turlington and the Beaver hat worn by his brother Sheriff Will Turlington, a crochet bedspread made by Bertha Westbrook and donated by Derek Currin; a Bentwood highchair given to the Newton Byrd family by Dr. Bruce Langdon and donated to museum by Barbara Byrd Holt; Christine's Parrish's turquoise jewelry collection loaned by Stewart Akerman; a bucket used by the bucket brigade to fight fires in early Coats and loaned by Keith McLeod and the list could go on and on.

\* More vintage items will be addressed in the WINTER newsletter.

## Raleigh-Fayetteville Stagecoach Road, Old Stage and NC Highway 55

The Coats Museum volunteers are on a quest.

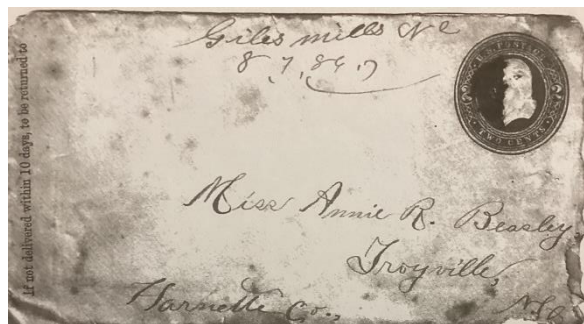
The questions are asked, "Where was the Raleigh-Fayetteville Stagecoach Road and what about the current Old Stage Road?" Are they the same? How are they associated with our local Coats-Grove history and NC Highway 55? Is it possible you can answer one or all of those questions?

This I do know. Turlington, Troyville and Barclaysville were once the sites for post offices, schools and developing business communities in the 1800's. TURLINGTON was called such because Willis Turlington had purchased 2300 acres from the Dushee Shaw heirs in 1839.



Shaw Halfway House

Some of the area upon which Coats is located was formerly designated on old maps as SHAW or TROYVILLE but was later incorporated as Coats and was named after Elder James Thomas Coats who had purchased over 700 acres from the Daniel Shaw heirs in 1875-76. He spurred it into a thriving little community.



Envelope mailed 8/7/1889 to Miss Annie R. Beasley, Troyville, NC (Harnett Co.)

BARCLAYSVILLE was named after the John and Mildred Barclay family who owned the Barclays Inn and over 2800 acres from 1820's to 1880's if you include the property of their son-in-law C.C. Barbee. ALL three places were located on the Raleigh-Fayetteville Stagecoach Road.

The stagecoach line might have been established to carry mail and later added passengers on the trips from one stop to the next from Raleigh to Fayetteville or was it vice versa or both? Most of it was a rutted path of roots, mud or sand through forests of long leaf pines according to Frederick Olmstead who traveled it by stagecoach in 1853 and he wrote that the only comfortable ride was a short portion which was a plank road nearer to Fayetteville.

By 1910, there were only 945 miles of public roads in Harnett. Two townships paid taxes to maintain their roads while others used the "old system" of property owners on the roads maintaining them. As cars became the more popular mode of travel, better roads were needed.

In 1923, the HCBOC appointed road commissioners for the 13 Harnett townships. Grove was represented by J.M Langdon, J.B. Ennis and A.F. Grimes. In 1925, a proposition for road bonds of \$300,000.00 included a layout of Harnett County and two included parts of Grove Township.

The proposed Route#2 was to branch from #1 at Ernest Wilder's and to run practically as the route now lies between Lillington via Coats to the Johnston County line (NC 27 but once # 40). The second was Route #3 to extend from Duke (Erwin) via Coats and Angier and hence to the Wake County line at or near Kennebec practically paralleling with the Durham and Southern Railroad which made its last run on July 5, 1979 and tracks were removed from Feb. 11-17, 1982.

This 1923 road bond proposal according to the Harnett County News Oct. 8, 1923 would require a 17 cents tax levy to bring in \$42,000 while a 40 cents county wide levy would bring in enough money to pay bond expenses to build all "proposed" roads.

In 1926, the HCBOC and the road commissioners adopted a joint resolution resolving that this side of the county being the most populated area needed a

way to the state capital and requested to place on the system a gravel highway connecting #60 at Erwin and route through Turlington, Coats and Angier to connect with Route 21 at the most feasible point in Wake County.

The HCN, Aug. 19, 1926 issue stated that the Harnett County Highway Commission shared that surveying the right-of-way to determine the location of the road from Erwin to Angier via Coats and Barclaysville would begin and the road would be pushed to completion.

Did the entire route of the new road vary from the original Raleigh-Fayetteville Stagecoach Road? Were all landowners happy to have the road cross their farmlands?

By Jan. 4, 1927, Getty Browning, principal Locating and Claims Engineer, wrote that he had inspected the location of the new road to the county line in Wake County. The new road would start at Route #60 north of Erwin and continue on the west side of the Durham and Southern RR all the way to the Wake County line. Did it? The Jan. 6, 1927 edition of the HCN stated that part of the road would be done by Superintendent Ballard and the highway forces and the other let out to contract.

A contract for \$62,171.82 was awarded to W.C. Carter and \$7, 932.50 to W.B. Collins for the building of the road from Erwin to the Wake County line. It would be one of the “best hard surfaced roads” in the state. It was to be tarred as of Jan. 24, 1929 according to the HCN Jan. 24, 1929 edition.

The question is not answered. Did NC Hwy 55 stay west of the D&S Railroad and did it follow the complete route of the Raleigh Fayetteville Road? Did the Raleigh-Fayetteville Stage Coach Road go through Angier or through Barclaysville? Wasn’t Angier incorporated around 1901? But wait--there was a Cape Fear and Northern Railroad (later the Durham and Southern). Did it go past the Barclays Inn which was located in the area before one reaches the current Harnett Co. water tank or did it go through Angier? The Old Stage Road today goes past Old Stage Vet Hospital and intersects with NC 210) and goes into NC Hwy 401 going toward Raleigh.

## TIME TABLE Cape Fear and Northern Railroad.

Passenger Train. North Bound.		Passenger Train. South Bound.	
Leave—a. m.		Leave—p.m.	
Dunn .....	8:08	Apex.....	4:30
Duke .....	8:23	Holly Springs	4:43
Turlington ...	8:39	Varina .....	5:00
Coats.....	8:48	Angier.....	5:17
Barclaysville..	8:57	Barclaysville..	5:26
Angier.....	9:06	Coats.....	5:35
Varina .....	9:23	Turlington....	5:44
Holly Springs	9:40	Duke.....	6:00
Arrive Apex..	9:53	Arrive Dunn..	6:15

Local Freight and Passenger Train  
leaves Apex 11 a. m., arrives at Dunn  
2:11 p. m. Leaves Dunn 3:41 p. m., ar-  
rives at Apex 6:42 p. m.

Cape Fear & Northern Railroad Schedule for  
Turlington, Coats and Barclaysville

When did the road become known as NC Highway 55 which has its origin in the Franklinton-Durham area and not Raleigh in the early 1930's?

### Coats Heritage & Cotton Museums

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Open  
Thursdays 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Sundays 2 – 5 p.m.  
& Appointments  
Closed Holidays

www.coatsmuseum.com  
facebook groups:  
Coats Heritage & Cotton Museums  
Coats Museums’ Military Appreciation

Publications: *Coats Museum News*, Daily Record,  
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