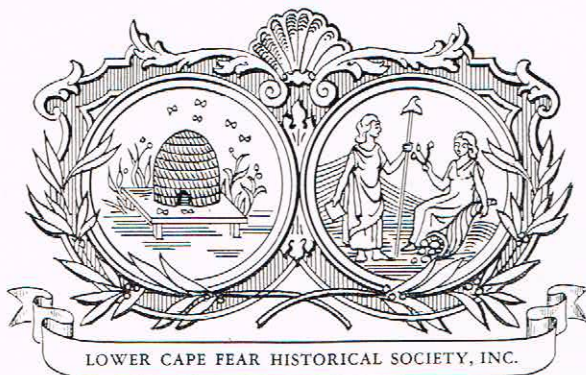




LOWER CAPE FEAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Inc. BULLETIN

VOLUME VI, NUMBER 3

WILMINGTON, N. C.

MAY, 1963

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Lower Cape Fear Historical Society is bringing to a close another exciting year. At the last meeting of the Board of Directors a motion was passed to present to the annual meeting of the Society a recommendation that the Society purchase the Latimer property on South Third Street for the sum of \$12,000.00. We should have a large number of members present to give careful consideration to this proposal. You will be making history. A headquarters building is a must for the Society and for the proper development of the historic area of the city. The Society is reaching a stage of growth wherein it is becoming necessary to extend the organization of the Society and put more of the general members to work. The present membership of the Society which is approximately five hundred should be raised to a thousand.

The Society made a contribution to the Louis T. Moore Memorial Fund and became a member of "The National Trust for Historic Preservation." The archives of the society have received several important publications.

The Carolina Charter Tercentenary celebration and the Confederate States Centennial Conference were outstanding events of the year. The Historical Tours were better than ever. The extensive publicity given these tours will bear fruit for the next several years. We rejoice with the opening of the Wilmington-New Hanover Museum in its new quarters and the continued development of New Brunswick. The brochure on "The Historic Area of Wilmington, North Carolina" is a most commendable publication. The Lower Cape Fear Historical Society, Incorporated, *Bulletin* is one of the finest in the country.

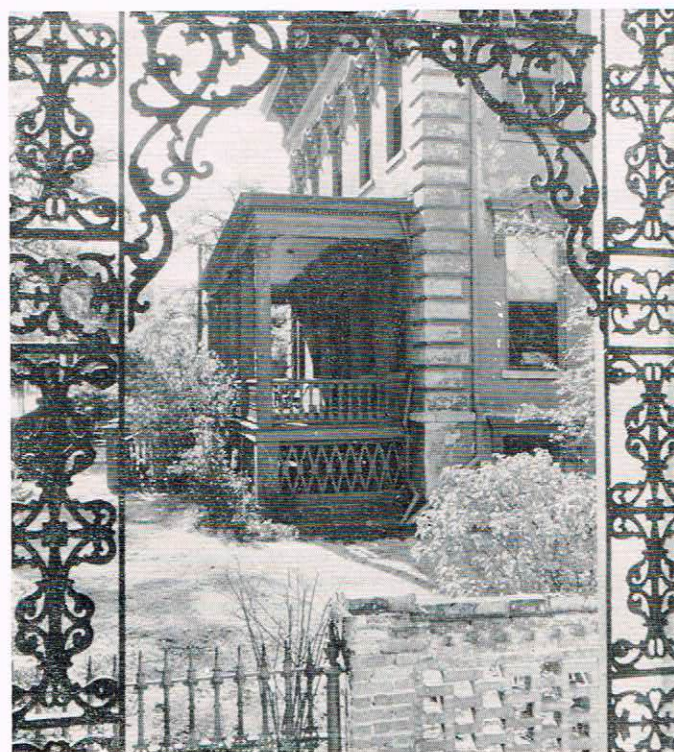
When you think about the accomplishments of the Society, you are thinking about people. How can we ever thank the many persons for their time and services? You have to mention members like Henry J. MacMillan, Mrs. Henry B. Rehder, Mrs. Ida Brooks Kellam, N. Winfield Sapp, Jr., Mrs. John R. MacKinnon, Ludlow P. Strong, A. L. Honeycutt, William E. Perdew, Dr. William Wagoner, Mrs. Paul Jennewein, Leslie N. Boney, Jr., R. V. Asbury, Miss Fannie deRosset, and Stanley South who have rendered service over and above the call of duty. The Junior League has been invaluable in the Historical Tours.

I shall long cherish the honor of having had the privilege of working with so many fine people in such a worthy cause as preserving the history and the historic sites of the City of Wilmington and cultivating throughout the state and nation an active interest in our illustrious history.

RANDOLPH L. GREGORY

President

THE ZEBULON LATIMER HOUSE



The Zebulon Latimer House

Zebulon Latimer was born in Connecticut on January 1, 1810. As a boy of fifteen he went to Edenton, N. C. to engage in business with his elder brother. In 1832 he moved to Wilmington and soon became one of the towns most successful commission merchants.

In 1843 Zebulon Latimer married Elizabeth Savage, daughter of Timothy Savage of Wilmington. Two years later he bought from his brother-in-law Henry R. Savage the north west corner lot at Third and Orange adjoining the Edward Savage house at 120 South Third Street.

The residence at 126 South Third Street was built for Zebulon and Elizabeth Savage Latimer in 1852. The builder was Robert B. Wood, a master builder from Nantucket who according to tradition came to Wilmington to construct Saint James Church (cornerstone laid 1839).

The structure consists of four floors, the lower floor an English basement which housed the kitchen and dining room. Each floor has four spacious rooms with smaller rooms in

(Continued on Page 6)

MEETING

Time and Place: Wednesday, May 8, 1963, 8:00 P.M., St. Andrews-Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Speaker: Mrs. Virginia Holmes.

Subject: "Williamsburg Restored."

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Miss Caroline E. Wolfe, 304 South 2nd Street.

Contributing

Miss Margaret G. Banck, 2022 Metts Ave.
Mrs. C. Morton Stewart, Stevenson, Maryland.

ARCHIVES CONTRIBUTIONS SINCE FEBRUARY, 1963

We appreciate contributions to our historical collection from Mrs. Carl C. Campbell, Mrs. Paul Jennewein, Mr. Henry J. MacMillan, and from the Museum Curator of Fort Laramie National Historic Site, Fort Laramie, Wyoming.



Mrs. Holmes

Virginia Holmes has been a member of the staff of Colonial Williamsburg for more than twenty years. For fourteen of these years she served as a hostess conducting visitors through historic buildings such as the Governor's Palace, the colonial Capitol and the celebrated Raleigh Tavern.

Since 1955, however, Mrs. Holmes has made use of her background in horticulture to escort Walking Tours through the beautiful gardens and the historic area of the town. She has served also as guide for special guests, who might be a state governor, a college president or a class of earnest and inquisitive foreign students. It is said that she has guided more individual groups through the city than any other person.

Mrs. Holmes maintains an office at the Court House Museum where she answers garden enthusiasts' questions about 18th century gardens and plant materials. Another of her activities is giving illustrated talks on the History, Houses and Horticulture of Colonial Williamsburg. This is one of the regular programs scheduled at the Information Center, and in many places she has described the city on both radio and television.

She is the eleventh generation of her family in Tidewater Virginia and a descendant of the noted Custis family. A graduate of Cornell University, she has studied foreign languages in France, and was at one time advisor on purchasing for the Detroit Foreign Language Library and also associated with the Detroit Art Museum's Dutch and Eighteenth Century Wings.

She returned to Williamsburg with the idea of continuing her French studies at the College of William and Mary, but Eighteenth Century America so captured her interest that she continues to devote her time to learning more about the life of Colonial Virginians. She has come to share some of that with us at our meeting.

FORM OF BEQUEST

The great need of the Association, in order to render broader and more effective service, is to have funds available for historical research, publications, and restoration of historic sites. For those purposes, it is hoped that interested persons will bequeath to the Association whatever sum or sums of money may be available. The following form is suggested:

To the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society, Inc., a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of North Carolina, I give and bequeath the sum of \$_____.

This bequest is unrestricted, and the Board of Directors or other governing body may use and expend the same for the benefit of the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society, Inc., in any manner it deems appropriate.

Historyland Trails: Some Questions That Must Be Answered

Barbara Beeland Rehder

The Historyland Trails Plan is a project to promote North Carolina as a greater tourist attraction. The richness of North Carolina, particularly of Coastal North Carolina, as an historic area has long been known among historians. These attractions are not well known nationally, however, or even by Tar Heels themselves, because most of them are still in a state of raw material, undeveloped and unmarketed.

Two fairly recent developments have caught the imagination of a group of North Carolinians and provide the impetus for them to begin the Historyland Plan. First, the Cherokee drama and Indian village re-creation in the mountains, and Tryon Palace restoration and the USS Battleship North Carolina memorial on the coast have proven beyond doubt the vast drawing power of historical attractions when they are accessible along main-traveled and well-advertised highways. Second, an urgency to develop Eastern North Carolina is dictated by the fact that in 1964-65 the Hampton Roads, Virginia, Bridge-Tunnel will be opened. This is expected to shoot some five thousand travelers a day right down through the state. A high percentage of these will be tourist traffic which can either stop and spend money in North Carolina or speed through. Meanwhile, Interstate Highway 95 is expected to be completed by about 1970, providing a throughway over which tourists may habitually by-pass Coastal North Carolina unless attractions are developed and travel patterns established that will invite tourists to stop over. Thus the time is right for the marketing of what could become Eastern North Carolina's prime economic asset, or we may see its value diminish.

Efforts to make Historyland Trails a reality are being channeled through a group headed by Charles B. Wade, Chairman of the State Advertising Committee of the State Board of Conservation and Development. State co-sponsors include the Highway Commission, Department of Archives and History, Travel Council of North Carolina, and the Extension Division of State College. Working with them are representatives of area development councils, county historical associations, and regional and local promotional organizations.

An association to guide the program was formed in Raleigh March 19. Senator P. D. Midgett, Jr. of Englehard was elected president. Mrs. Lucille Winslow of Hertford, Edmund Harding of Washington, and Glenn Tucker of Carolina Beach are vice-presidents, and Miss Gertrude Carraway of New Bern is secretary-treasurer. The directors include Wilmington's Fred B. Graham and Henry J. MacMillan. Professor W. K. Dorsey of Wilmington College serves as chairman of the organization committee. Representatives met in Greenville April 22 to sign the application for charter and begin functions. The money that will be needed to transform ideas into realities is expected to come from participating communities.

Where would the Historyland Trails go? Eventually they would spread throughout the state, but the immediate project is for the first of the History Trails to follow US 17. Down US 17 the trail would lead past dismal Swamp, through Elizabeth City, Hertford, Edenton, Williamston, Washington, New Bern, Jacksonville, Wilmington, and Shallotte. Side trails would carry the leisurely traveler to Creswell, Lake Phelps, Roanoke Island, Nags Head, and Kill Devil Hills; along US 264 and over a county road to Bath; US 70 to Morehead City and Beaufort; along NC 24 through Swansboro; and in the Wilmington area to Fort Fisher, Orton Plantation, Brunswick Town, and Southport. Quite aside from such outstanding restorations as those at Bath, with the state's old-

est church, and Tryon Palace, its first fixed capital, many and varied attractions exist along these side trails and simply want being made useful and enjoyable.

North Carolina has been promoted with outstanding success as Vacationland. That its promotion as Historyland can meet with equal success is doubtless: North Carolina is at least as rich in history as in vacation resorts. But aside from its obvious economic benefits this imminent tourist trail poses some questions for us as North Carolinians and as Americans.

Just what kind of tourist trail do we have in mind? Do we picture roads that are efficient and pleasant, where the natural character of the countryside is enhanced—roads that have a good functional flow into and out of towns but are also inviting? What about reasonable lodging, reliable food, well-kept rest areas? When our tourists arrive at the sites we have prepared for them, what should they find? Are we thinking of the quiet, wooded charm of Brunswick Town? Are we aspiring to something like the dignified but expensively ordered Williamsburg? Are we remembering our personal sense of discovery and solitude at Kill Devil Hills? Isn't it perfectly reasonable to expect that a land of history should offer noble inspiration to young leaders, relaxation to family groups, opportunity for the perusal of scholars, and plentiful rewards to enthusiastic patriots bent on examining their heritage? Ought we not also to reach out with vicarious pleasure toward the tourist-dreamer (and America is full of them) who might say with Longfellow:

Often I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea;
Often in thoughts go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town
And my youth comes back to me.

And what about us? Are we thinking of the values of our homeland that must be preserved *for us*, if it is to be a land to stay in and not to flee from?

If we are not asking these questions, we should be, for what we are proposing is not simply a system of roads or a business venture, but the experiences of living people. The real profit must lie in those experiences, or we are going to reap frustration at every hand.

If we are thinking that a History Trail should provide these possibilities of rich human reward, or even some of them, examples all over America are dealing out some hard



A panorama of junk assails the eye at the turn off from the Highway 17 overpass.



One of several automobile graveyards on the approach to U. S. S. North Carolina.

facts that we are going to have to digest before we can plan for such possibilities. Actually there are very few places in America today where there are either site controls or highway controls enough to make the prospect of a tourist trail anything but a giant headache for planners who proceed from the idea of rewarding human experience.

It has not been fifty years since Henry Ford made his revolutionary promise: "I will build a motor car for the great multitude . . . but it will be so low in price that no man making a good salary will be unable to own one—and enjoy with his family the blessing of hours of pleasure in God's great open spaces."

That our road builders are having such a time keeping up with the fulfillment of that great vision is surely no fault of the automobile. It has produced a society of the most astonishing activity and mobility, an American restless, inquisitive, young at heart, and on the go. And it has produced endless ribbons of concrete that somehow get him where he wants to go, but have also filled his days with danger, monotony, frustration, anxiety, vulgarity, and ruin.

Certainly this represents the biggest building and planning problem in America today. In North Carolina our roads are our biggest single investment. As we pour millions of dollars every year into our roads, are we aware, that they function as the state's show windows? Much has been said about the billboard scandal, and rightly so, but what about the thousands of ordinary citizens, shopkeepers, filling station operators, lunchroom owners, that make garbage dumps of the roadsides? Even the farms are edged with tin cans, dilapidated sheds, and old oil drums. What are our citizens doing, to tolerate the mounds of rusty cars that greet travelers as they enter our cities?

This type of road blight is created by people who are not money-mad lobbyists but ordinary people of goodwill. What has gone wrong? Why are they insensitive and irresponsible about roadside order and cleanliness? If they can be so caught in a junk culture (billions of articles to use and throw away) that their eyes are indifferent to piles of discarded cans in sizes from snuff to airplanes, if their senses are not very much outraged by an open county dump complete with scurrying rats, what is to be expected of the people with a vested interest in really exploiting the traveler?

Roadside advertising is a logical outgrowth of a motorized public. People need directions to lodging and food and various services. But clearly the sign board situation has got out of hand. It can only be a matter of time before the public realizes that its freedom is jeopardized as surely as if they were bound and dragged to See Rock City, held and forced to consume Stuckey's Pecans, required by law to haul their querulous children to Visit Silver Springs. The psychological principles of this advertising are known: repetition, movement, use of symbols, and so on. The motorist driving along the highway can cut off the radio commercial just as he can, at home, go for a beer while the TV girl gets a Toni, but his alert and captive eye cannot avoid a billboard. Whether he wills it or not, his privacy is invaded. He is in-

deed captive, and this is indeed coercion. It is really not tolerable that private interests should be able to exercise such undue control over the American consumer through use of the public road system.

Of course the loudest outcry against billboards is their ruin of the landscape. Wrote Ogden Nash:

I think that I shall never see
A billboard lovely as a tree.
Perhaps, unless the billboards fall,
I'll never see a tree at all.

His verse may be prophetic, for in Chicago, writes Peter Blake in *Horizon* (May, 1961), "the city authorities have been busy cutting down the tops of any trees that interfere with the view of billboards along Lake Shore Drive!" Billboards have blocked from almost all highway view the beautiful city of San Francisco and its bay, and in other cities throughout the land (Seattle, Los Angeles, New York) they have blocked out for city dwellers the sustaining views of nature.

Quite often on those strips of road that provide entrance and exit for our towns, billboards are added to dumps, honky-tonks, glaring neon, congested traffic, noise and confusion to form a wall of road blight that is a disgrace to America. We have all seen and been dismayed by such slum channels. If our highways are our show cases, then from a purely monetary point of view, what kind of showcase is this for the customers of our multimillion dollar travel industry?

A good many of our leaders at all levels have taken action. During the great Congressional billboard battle in 1958, magazines and newspapers all over the country took up the cry to ban billboards from new highways. This called for considerable courage, because the billboard lobby represents the tremendous wealth and influence of the advertising world. The outcome in Congress was that the decision should be left up to the states. In North Carolina, the recent Research Triangle Regional Planning report has said that adequate right-of-way width and control of land adjacent to the rights-of-way are the keys to proper roadside development. Current standards are not adequate for roadside protection, they found. It was also reported that development cannot be carried out by local governments but must be put into the hands of a state agency. And of course the prerequisite for action is the education of the public to the need.

Road blight, while it presents a dreaded problem to the planners of such a system as the Historyland Trails, is not the basic issue in road planning. The basic issue is: What should a road be? This may sound a trifle too basic, but the answers to that question are undergoing radical changes right along. Early road builders had to follow the contour of the land along streams and around hills. The onslaught of big machinery that could literally move mountains rapidly changed the old contour roads and produced highways of endless monotony and mediocrity. Now our planners have come up with some facts that must again alter our concept of road building.

In Pennsylvania a group of doctors conducted a research project on driver fatigue. It was found that roadside rests greatly reduced accidents. This knowledge was incorporated into the plans for the Pennsylvania Turnpike. The Minnesota Department of Highways made a study several years ago which showed that accident rates are definitely related to frequency of roadside advertising signs. Conservationists have long deplored the senseless destruction of existing plant growth in constructing new highways, pointing out the enormous expense of the necessary replanting, to say nothing of the loss of shade and beauty. State Highway departments are well aware of the dangers of confusing masses of signs, and Wilmington's *Star-News* has recently forcefully called attention to this hazard at the busy intersections of Market at Third and Seventeenth. The addition of stately Historic Trails markers to this jumble of numbers, wires, poles, and trash cans seems ludicrous.

Noted in *Time*, April 12, is a new book, *Man-Made America*, by planners Tunnard and Pushkarev. The authors

point out that on straight, empty stretches of road the driver has no way of instinctively judging his speed, no interesting sights, and may develop hypnosis and fall asleep. Recommended are continuously curving roadways that present changing vistas of the countryside as opposed to dangerously distracting advertising, not only for aesthetics but as a matter of life and death. They say that in the average terrain such roads are very little longer and no more expensive to build. To prove their point the authors use studies of thirteen freeways, correlating accident rates and aesthetic qualities.

All this is not so new as it seems really. The beginner in functional design runs headlong into the old question, What makes a good bed? and the answer that as far as *use* is concerned, one can sleep in a coffin quite well, but it isn't very comfortable. So it is with our highways. Being on the road is no longer just a means of going somewhere; it has become a way of life of the American people. As such, it must provide him with not only the physical-biological necessities, but the emotional-psychological ones as well: contact with the beauty of his land, freedom from exhausting harassment, the possibilities of enjoyment and enrichment. These are just as much a function of our modern highways as moving traffic safely. And this concept is certainly the only sound basis for Historyland Trails.

What about Historic Sites? The charm of our undeveloped sites is doubtless, and their many values, developed, present a very exciting prospect. But getting the two together is going to take some pretty hardheaded courage. It calls for informed, responsible leaders. It calls for unselfish citizens. For if we envision our historic sites as Coastal North Carolina's foremost economic asset, we had better envision them also as a big, booming junk business. Why? It is happening all over America.

It is a very lucrative business to exploit public taste. Many people on vacation like noise and crowds; many want souvenirs and hot dogs and games. There is nothing at all wrong with this. The amusement center at Carolina Beach, for example, serves a delightful purpose, as does Tweetsie's Railroad in Blowing Rock and others. This is one of the aspects of Vacationland. It is quite a different matter, however, for our great national parks and historic shrines to present such a face. Yet from coast to coast the disease of so-called tourist blight is spreading. Travelers are too often finding America's expected scenic beauty something hard to stomach and its hallowed ground turned into cheap commercial enterprise.

Changing Times, November 1962, observes this desecration in an article entitled "America the Beautiful, Heritage Or Honky Tonk?" It had this to say about Gettysburg Battlefield:

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. No matter how you approach this hallowed ground, the route is lined with signs leading to extraneous commercial attractions. On the west, the Chambersburg Road, which Lee followed en route to the fateful battle, there is an Indian village, complete with totem poles and tepees; it's labeled "authentic," although Indians have not been in this area since 1750, and never did use totem poles or tepees when they were here. On the north, the road from Harrisburg, near the place where General Jubal Early's force smashed Union defenses the first day of battle, there is a Horse 'N' Buggy Museum, variously and modestly advertised as "America's largest" and the "World's largest" collection.

But to be *near* is not enough. The new Howard Johnson motel advertises happily that it is "practically in the center of the Battlefield," inviting guests to experience the art of pleasant living only a few hundred yards from the field of Pickett's Charge and the scene of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Then there is "America's most beautiful land of make-believe," a place called Fantasyland, with monkeys and Mother Goose, "right in the center of things" facing General Meade's headquarters just below the National Cemetery. And Stuckey's garish red and yellow

roadside emporium, accompanied by Texaco's Fire Chief, astride the line of Longstreet's daring and bloody attack of the second day, where you can purchase mementoes of the battlefield, including ceramic birds, dogs, horses, alligator bags and ash trays.

The group of attractions called "inspirational and educational" include a Hall of Presidents, a National Civil War Wax Museum, and the Gettysburg Battlefield Diorama and Museum which features sound effects of smoking rifles, burning wagons, and blazing cannon fire. The Battlefield Tour offers "moments of emotion-drenched history" in stereophonic sound. You travel by bus and listen to the "voices" of Lincoln and Pickett, with cannons thrown in as "chills run up and down your spine."

What did Lincoln say? That brave men consecrated these fields "far above our poor power to add or detract." Sadly enough, not so.

North Carolina comes in for its share of attention in the same widely read article because of the display of caged animals as attention-getters at roadside stands in the Great Smokies.

In Wilmington, a Historyland area which is as yet "undeveloped and unmarketed," the *North Carolina* has been provided an effective setting with the handsome Customs House in the background, and yet its approaches are spoiled by junkyards. There are fine old houses deteriorating. There are business enterprises that advertise excessively within the designated Historic District. Strip development at the city's entrances are uncontrolled either by their proprietors or by the city-county government. Giant billboards advertise everything, even our great financial and building institutions, which in some parts of the country have taken a real leadership in providing clear, beautiful approaches.

These are sore spots in our present local situation. Nobody wants to be done out, and nobody wants to step on anybody's toes about monetary gain, but where is this to end, and where begin, if we are expecting to make a truly beautiful, even bearable, historic attraction of the Wilmington area? If we are "developed and marketed," what is to prevent our historical sites from becoming like Gettysburg? Must we expect honky-tonk strip development at Fort Fisher and Brunswick Town? Is part of this "economic asset" figured in terms of profit on endless junk that is never ever really carted away?

Some answers have been given as a starting point. A reclamation project will have to be pursued throughout Eastern North Carolina—in historic districts and along the lovely old waterfronts. Many areas do not need reclamation as much as protective zoning ordinances or simple measures to regulate cleanliness and order. Cleaning up is indicated in many places where strip development has already taken hold. In an editorial the Greensboro *Daily News* suggests that



Is it true that this is "The look Carolina loves" as stated by the billboard? Shown is part of the Cornwallis House restoration carefully done by the Colonial Dames of America in the State of North Carolina.

"Agitation in the public prints will do something to tidy up these roadside monstrosities."

Several community programs, planned before the Historyland project was set in motion, have attracted attention because they suggest how local activities might be developed to promote History Trails and attract tourists. Two are Edenton's "Pilgrimage of Colonial Edenton and Countryside," sponsored by the Edenton Woman's Club, and Wilmington's "Tours of Wilmington's Historic Houses," sponsored by the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society with the Junior League of Wilmington. Wilmington also has already set up a Board of Architectural Review, whose function is to review and pass on any proposed change to buildings within the Historical District. A general expansion of such programs throughout the Historyland Trails area is indicated.

No matter what legislation is passed or what activities are promoted, it is still going to be up to the people to protect their homeland. We need local responsible leaders, but we must realize that the greatest power in our country today is an informed public opinion. What does that mean to each citizen personally? This: *support* the beautification work done by garden and civic clubs; the preservation and restoration work of historical groups; strict zoning laws and other protective legislation. *Refuse* to patronize places whose advertising, dirtiness, or anything else about them offends you. *Object* to them openly. *Question, criticize, Care* about quality.

Above all *believe* in the power of the American people to accomplish beauty and order. A good deal overmuch has been said about the Ugly American, about his softness, waste, vulgarity, inability to control the greedy entrepreneurs who lay waste the land. It has got us mocking ourselves, wondering if greed and uncontrol really might be an inextricable part of our nature. It has got us doubtful if our vast, unyielding law can be made to do our will. The disease of the times is really the conviction that *nothing can be done*. The trappings of our self-government fill us with helplessness and dismay, much as a knight in glorious armor that is so heavy he can't stand up. The thinking, acting, believing American is not trapped.

America has passed and still is passing through a pioneer stage. In this era of startling developments we have not yet caught up to ourselves. The junk that clutters the nation is not a sign of the depravity of our civilization, but is really the temporary encampment of the civilization we are building. Time and again Americans have shown themselves capable of creating order, and, historically, with great sacrifice adhering to the highest ideals. It is now time that we mature, learn to protect what we have and to build with a vision beyond our noses. The Historyland Trails project gives us a rich opportunity.

THE ZEBULON LATIMER HOUSE

(Continued from Page 1)

rear. The reception rooms on the main floor are divided by sliding doors, making it possible for a large group of people to circulate freely.

The classic-revival house, constructed of brick and granite, is beautifully ornamented with pedimented windows and is crowned with a deep bracketed architrave. The graceful wreaths which form part of the design of the architrave serve as ventilators for the fourth floor. The bold quoins at the corners of the house give it a masculine solidity which is relieved by the iron work on the south side. The classic front piazza has Temple of the Wind columns which were popular in Wilmington in the 1850's. Reddish brown stucco covers the brick and reminds us that this was the era of brownstone row houses. The heavy color is a taste we no longer share with the Victorians. The iron fence and servant quarters complete the layout of the property as a superb example of an elegant ante-bellum town residence.

The interior of the house is strangely simple for a fine house of the period. The chimney pieces on the parlor floor are Italian white marble but there is none of the elaborate plaster work characteristic of a fine mid-Nineteenth Century house.

When the house was under construction a family of slaves, a man and his wife and several children, were put up for sale to settle an estate. It was hoped to sell them as a family but the price they would bring as a whole was a large sum. When no buyer was found it was reluctantly decided to sell them individually. Mrs. Zebulon Latimer was distressed, but her husband said the only money available was the amount set aside for ornamental plaster work in the new house. They agreed that saving the family was far more important than decoration. The family was saved. The house never had an ornamental ceiling or cornice.

The house was the residence of Mrs. Zebulon Latimer until her death in 1904. She survived her husband for twenty three years.

Their eldest son William Latimer (1852-1923) inherited the property. He was a graduate engineer and lawyer. Early in his career he was associated with the firm of Stedman and Latimer. He was president of the Acme Manufacturing Company. As the first president of Wilmington Seacoast Railroad he had much to do with developing Wrightsville Beach and adjacent sounds. Mr. Latimer willed the Third Street house to his nephew, Herbert Latimer, entailing it to his widow, Margaret Iredell Latimer, for her lifetime. Since the house was built one hundred and thirteen years ago it has never been out of the Latimer family.

—H. J. MACM.

LOWER CAPE FEAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA

Non-Profit Organization
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