

Martin County Historical Society, Inc.



Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 4 Issue 2

April, May June 2011

MCHS Officers

- President - Fred Harrison
- Vice President - Rose McMahan
- 1st Vice President -Patsy Miller
- Recording Secretary - Bill Smith
- Treasurer & Book Sale Coordinator - Shirley Wilson
- Corresponding Secretary, News Letter Editor & Videographer - Jennifer Sheppard
- Advisors Emeritus - Jean Rogers, Historical Preservation
- Doris Wilson - Manning Room

NEWS RELEASE

The Martin County Historical Society will soon have its own website.

Stay turned for further developments.

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Martin County — Home of Unique Research Facility

I believe there are many people living in Martin and surrounding Counties who have roots here that are unaware of our unique research facility. This is the first in a series of articles in which I will be offering background information on how this resource was created and giving you a glimpse of the kinds of books and materials available for research by the public.

Francis Marion Manning was the son of William Christian and Sara Margaret Roberson Manning. Francis was born in Martin County on 20 Aug 1903 and lived here until his death in 1982. Like his father before him, he was editor of our local newspaper. *The Enterprise*, for several years. Not only

did Mr. Manning have a career in journalism, he co-authored three books, *Religious and Education in Martin County, 1774-1974* © 1974, *Martin County History, Volume 1*, © 1977 and *Martin County History Volume II*, © 1979, all published by The Enterprise Publishing Company, Williamston, NC. These titles and over a dozen others are available for purchase through the Martin County Historical Society, PO Box 468, Williamston, NC 27892. These books are also listed on the Travel and Tourism Website see www.visitmartincounty.com.

Mr. Manning was good friends with Warren Biggs, who loved collecting old books and manuscripts. Much of what has been preserved of Martin County's

written record outside of county and government records can be attributed to Warren. Together these men used the Enterprise's tobacco edition to share with the public the voluminous information Warren had collected.

Mr. Biggs gave his entire collection to Francis Manning, when he died. The warehouse behind Warren's house was chock full of "stuff" as was his house. When Manning passed away in 1982, his daughters gave part of the collection to East Carolina University (ECU) and the other part to the Martin County Historical Society. Shortly thereafter, while maintaining ownership of the collection, the society entered into an

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New Book Available on Rosenwald

A new book has been published about preserving the Rosenwald School in Hamilton, North Carolina. The book, entitled *Hamilton Rosenwald School Preservation Story: Preserving the Memories, The Faces and The Place*, includes some of

the old photographs that have been recovered as well as an overview of their findings about the school and those who played a role in its history. A limited supply of these books is available for \$35.00 each, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

If you would like to purchase a copy of this book, please contact, Carol Shields at (252) 826-5719 or cjshields@touchnc.net.

Thank you Carol
for contributing this article.

Oral History DVDs for Sale

Our own Patsy Miller came up with the wonderful idea of filming Oral Histories of Martin County Citizens to preserve their information for future generations and as a "fund raiser". We have been busy ever since scheduling and taping interviews of our Martin County people.

We currently have the following DVDs ready for sale:

1. Verna D. Godwin-Williamston during the 20th century reflections.
2. Vera Harrison, Pete Rogers and Gene Rogers - Village life in Bear Grass in the 20th century, especially time and merchant economy.
3. Buie Bailey - Bear Grass in the early years, i.e. "running moonshine?"
4. Clarence Biggs - early life and adult education in Martin County, 1950-2001.
5. Willie Peele and Gene Rogers - Education and schools during the Civil Rights Movement in Williamston.
6. Haul Reddick—Agriculture business in Williamston, 1950-2000.
7. Mary Carrow Griffin, Mickie Nelson and Jean Rogers - Farm Life and Pinetown 20th Century reflections.
8. Tommy Price, James B. Peel III - Fire and Rescue and Hasmet, Williamston.
9. Milton Griffin - Education and religion in Farm Life in the 20th Century, Smithwick Creek Church and Martin County Schools in Griffins Township.
10. Sandra McCleary of W. C. Chance Cultural Center - reflects on early African American education and the centers vitality in Robersonville and the County.
11. Nickie Hart - Children of the World Perform as a Chorus, Nationwide.
12. Kate Matthews - Morehead Scholar 2010 reflects on life experiences during Outward Bound.
13. Everette James - Robersonville, Native Doctor and Philanthropic Art Collector.
14. Robersonville 2 volume set of DVDs, Joe Robertson - Robersonville Community life in the 1930s and 1940s especially Irving Smith, Jr.
15. Harry Thompson - Local historian on the value of oral histories.
16. Sr. Kieran Williams, IHM of Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Sister Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Relating to Religious and Educational Mission, providing food bank services and serving a multi-cultural community of Williamston and the region.
17. Deborah Brown, Gloria Hassall (British Citizen) - "Cousins After All", English ancestry.
18. Jim Horton - Priest of the Church of the Advent for many years, a local volunteer, political activist, and activist for human services.
19. Dr. Bill Gray - Retired local Dentist talks about his life and Military Experience.

The DVDs sell for \$25.00 each (or \$40.00 for the 2 Vol. set of #15 above) including tax for NC residents and shipping for out of state residents.

This project is ongoing therefore we are continuing to schedule interviews. Patsy calls the subject, does a pre-interview and then she co-ordinates a session for the final interview. Jennifer is called in to film the event and as soon as that is accomplished, she uses the MCHS Computer to create an Oral History DVD to add to our inventory.

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Martin County Home of Unique Research Facility

agreement with Martin Community College to make Mr. Manning's collection available to the public for research purposes. The college dedicated a room in which to house that collection. The room was appropriately named the Francis M. Manning History Room and is located in the Martin Community College Library, Bldg 2, 1161 Kehukee Park Rd., Williamston, NC 27892, (252) 792-1521). The records in this repository may be viewed by anyone during

the regular business hours of the college library. The information in the Manning room is not just genealogical in nature. There is also a large amount of truly wonderful cultural material that reflects more than two hundred years of Martin County History. First editions of literary works by Martin County natives, newly printed matter related to the county and information concerning

the area's personalities, politics, business activity, etc. is readily found in every nook and cranny of the collection. Fred Harrison says, "working in the field as I do, I can safely say that we have in the Manning Room what may well be the most comprehensive collection of materials related to a single county in the State of North Carolina. We encourage the public to continue to contribute paper and book items that carry on and add to a better understanding of what Martin county is all about." [Fred Harrison contributed to this article]

Grenville and the Lost Colony of Roanoke

By Andrew Thomas Powell

{A Book review by Jennifer Sheppard}

Mr. Powell is in the distinctive position to have written this book as he not only lives in England but is the retired Mayor of Bideford with access to never before published information regarding the voyages. He also possesses first hand knowledge of "Croatoan" having spent time where the colonists were said to have settled. This gives him a unique perspective on America's greatest unsolved mystery. I must confess, household chores and the like suffered greatly while I was reading this book because it was virtually impossible to put down! This work is concisely written, easy to read, brilliantly shared and exciting to say the least. The introduction of the book sums it up beautifully, from which I quote: "The story of the first attempt to colonise (sic) America by the English

Lord of the Manor of Bideford and was almost exclusively known for being the subject of an Alfred, Lord Tennyson poem....." Next, Andrew Powell covers "The Voyage of Amadas and Barlowe 1584 and The Voyage of Grenville 1585." He moves on to include The Military Colony of 1585, Parts One and Two. Then he covers the "Voyages of 1586, The "Planters' Colony of 1587," "The Voyages of 1588," "The deposition of Pedro Diaz 1585-1589," "Raleigh's Assignment of 1589," and ends the transcriptions with "The Voyage of 1590. Subsequently he includes information unknown to have been published on the "ships and captains of England" involved in these voyages, without whose participation this amazing adventure would not have been possible.

vides never before published information uncovered by The Lost Colony Research Group, the Croatoan Archaeological Society, Professor Mark Horton of Bristol University and the author himself, Andrew Powell. The footnotes containing detailed explanations of unfamiliar terms and words, found in the transcription of the original documents, are invaluable and much appreciated by the reader. This enables the reader to understand obsolete terms/words found in the journals he meticulously transcribed. As a genealogist who insists on working with primary sources whenever possible, this is certainly a plus and the fact that it is a true and accurate account of what actually happened make it a terrific read.

nation is a story of extraordinary courage, despair, misfortune, joy and simple wonder.....prepare for an adventure no Hollywood producer could hope to conjure in their wildest dreams, and remember, as you read, that this is a true story." Mr. Powell leads us step by step, through the entire sequence of events undertaken to plant a permanent English settlement in what was to become the USA. He begins his book with a short biography of Sir Richard Grenville, the "unsung hero" that is "unsung" no more. Some may not be aware that Grenville made more than one voyage to what was to become America and also served as "onetime

And last but not least, Mr. Powell shares his own thoughts and analysis on "The Colonists," including the types of expertise the people considered for this exploration would have had to possess in order to survive and to thrive in their new lives in an unknown wilderness. In the next chapter Questions, Answers; Answers, Questions, he summarizes the "If Only's" revealing the possible "near misses" and "close encounters" that may have designated Croatoan as the first permanent English settlement in America rather than Jamestown. Mr. Powell ends his work with "The Hunt for The Lost Colony" wherein he pro-

I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the study of the so called "Lost Colony" and to those who truly enjoy reading a good non-fiction story which just happens to be some heretofore unknown history of what would one day become the United States of America! This book is 302 pages, measures 8X5 inches, ISBN-10: 1848765967; ISBN-13: 978-1848765962 (Troubadour Publishing Ltd. © 2011, 5 Weir Rd., Kibworth Beauchamp, Leicester, LE8 OLQ, WWW.TROUBADOR.CO.UK). The book is also available from www.amazon.com for \$16.78.

Henry Robason, Born 1747 Said to Be Ancestor of Most Robersons in Town of Robersonville

"Information on the Roberson family of Martin County, NC is taken from notes, court records and memorandums, a result of research by the late Orlando P. Roberson, which was made between 1905 & 1914. These records, with additional verification by Attorney Paul D. Roberson, his son, to whom these records were given, gives a brief sketch of the earliest of the ancestors known at this time. This is shown in a family tree drawn by Orlando P. Roberson in 1913 and is now in the home of his son, Paul D. Roberson, of Robersonville, NC. The word Robins," an early English name has been spelled since coming to America

many ways, thus, Robinson, Robertson, Roberson, Robason and Roberts. Most of the family spelled their name Robason until about the time of the Civil War, or shortly thereafter, then the family name changed to Roberson. The first Henry Roberson (that we are sure about) was born in England in 1710, came to America, and lived in the Chesapeake Area of VA for a few years. He then moved to [this] area. (He served as a member of the Tyrrell Co. Militia in 1754, & enlisted as a musician (drummer) in Dawson's Co. of the 7th NC Continental Line in 1777). His will, dated Jan 28, 1785 & probated in 1794 (WB -1, Page 199, Martin County, NC.

Had sons named: Henry, Luke, Joshua, James & David (John, Harrison, & Jesse & two others that may have died or left the area before Henry's will was written. His three daughters were: Clonah who married a Griffin, one who married a Peal and another who married a Lilley or Perry. The family believes two of the brothers & the three girls settled in the general area of what is now Griffins Township, NC."

Source: Martin Co. Heritage Book and family website http://www.robersons.us/roberson_family_history.html.
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**MARTIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
INC.**

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**Martin County
Historical Society, Inc.**

Meetings

General (Membership) Meetings are usually held on the fourth Thursday in January, March, May and September, and the third Thursday in November

Dues

Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$30.00
Business	\$50.00
Life	\$150.00

Martin County Historical Society to have Own Web Site Website

The Martin County Historical Society has been working hand in hand with Deane and Bailey Phelps of Interactive Communications, Inc. (ICOM) a local Company that develops and maintains web-sites, to create a sensational website for the society. The following background information on the company was contributed by Deane Phelps.

[“Interactive Communications, Inc.”](#) (ICOM) has been developing web sites for more than a dozen years. We’ve worked with individuals, organizations, businesses of all types and even multiple state agencies on very large projects. Geographically, the web sites have covered North Carolina “and spread as far as Alaska and even one-under development-in South Africa. However, because we’re located in Mar-

tin County (Jamesville), our favorite projects have always included those that help showcase the best of home and the places nearby. We have been so pleased to work with the Martin County Historical Society to develop their web site. It is especially exciting because we can begin to look at our past through the window of new technology. The facts don’t change, of course, but the way they come together-text, photos, links to associated people, places and subjects in books and other resources, voices and even moving pictures—are easily accessible in a short time frame. We’re especially excited about beginning what will be an ongoing process of developing the next “edition of Martin County’s History”.

This documentation of our history doesn’t end on a certain page

of a book published in a certain year but will continue to grow as residents, former residents and those with other ties to the county contribute their personal, family, business, community, controversy, event or other stories *online* for all the world to read. Yes, this is a new way for us to document our past and it will most likely draw some criticism but, as John F. Kennedy said, “Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future. That applies even to the exploration of history, itself! If Martin County’s past is to be relevant to those who come after us, let us, at least, present it to them in their own language.”

Deane Phelps
President, ICOM