

**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- "Bald Head Island Conservancy," March 17, 7:00 PM
- "USS NC Memorial," April 21, 7:00



North Carolina  
*Maritime Museum*  
at Southport

## The Mullet Wrapper

**BALD HEAD ISLAND CONSERVANCY**

**PRESENTED BY SUZANNE DORSEY**

Join us this month to enjoy a presentation from Dr. Suzanne E. Dorsey, the Executive Director of the Bald Head Island Conservancy. Dr. Dorsey earned her doctorate in coastal oceanography and has been working in research and education for over 15 years. Communicating the importance of our coastal ecosystems, particularly Barrier Islands, is a primary focus for Dr. Dorsey. She feels that the first step to promoting conservation and preservation of these critical coastal habitats is forging a connection between the people who live and visit our beaches and the sensitive habits found here. The Smith Island Complex encompasses so many examples of rare and sensitive habitats and the mission of the Bald Head Island Conservancy provides a perfect opportunity to not only educate people but to promote effective stewardship of these environments. She enjoys working with people and sharing her passion for nature. Her spare time is devoted to her husband and two children.

**\*Sponsored by Walt & Joan Madsen**  
**Tuesday, March 17 7-9PM, Free**  
**Southport Community Building**



For more information on the Conservancy, Visit: [www.bhic.org](http://www.bhic.org)

**NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM (FOM)**



Museum Manager, Mary Strickland with February Speaker, Mark Wilde-Ramsing

Mark Wilde-Ramsing provided a successful and fascinating program about the earliest inhabitants of the Cape Fear region last month. Mark amused the crowd when he let them know that he had put off providing a program for us until he could finish his dissertation; which was just a week earlier.

**Upcoming Fundraiser Sunday, May 24, Afternoon in the Garden**

Wine & beer tasting, jazz ensemble, appetizers, and garden vignettes  
Committee volunteers needed, contact Barbara Stockbridge-Davidson,  
910-457-1968

**Tuesday Evening Program Needs**

We need Food & Setup hosts for the next few months. If you can sign up for one month, it would be helpful. You don't have to do it alone—you will have help. To sign up for a month, please contact Shirley Wilson @ 454-4327 or email: [wayfarer1@ec.rr.com](mailto:wayfarer1@ec.rr.com) or call the museum @ 457-0003.

We need someone to take over coordinating food and setup for our 3rd Tuesday evening programs from Shirley Wilson who has taken the Membership position on the Friends board. Please contact Shirley Wilson at the above number or email or contact the Museum. Our thanks always to Al Biasotti and Sally Buchanan for helping out at our Tuesday evening programs. It is much appreciated. My thanks to Naomi Winkelman & Zach Zuehlke for helping in February. THANK YOU to our February food hosts, Jim and Nancy Crum who not only provided delicious food for our enjoyment, but donated it as well. They also helped with setup and cleanup. Thanks Nancy & Jim.

**Membership**

For those of you who have recently joined the Friends or renewed your Friends Membership, your membership cards will be mailed to you within the next couple of weeks. We thank you so much for your membership.

*Shirley Wilson, Friend's Board*

# At the Museum: Waccamaw Siouan Indian Canoe

Naomi Winkelman



Waccamaw Siouan Canoe Fragment on Display at Museum

Just under The First Inhabitants exhibit, lies the oldest artifact at the museum. The artifact is a portion of an Indian canoe, over 2,000 years old. The canoe attests to the culture and technology of the Indians of the Middle Woodland period.

In 1988, the museum's canoe fragment was found on the shores of White Lake in Bladen County. The canoe is yellow pine and conservators preserved the wood through soaking it in sugar water. The sugar crystallized in the canoe, preventing the wood from shrinking. The North Carolina Underwater Archeology Unit obtained the canoe and sent a sample to a lab for a radiocarbon dating analysis. The report dated the canoe 1980 +/- 60 BP. This date indicates that the canoe was produced around 1,980 years BP, or before present. "Before present" is a terminology that indicates number of years "before 1950 AD." This means if the radiocarbon dating was accurate, that the canoe is from approximately year 30 BC (plus or minus 60 years).<sup>1</sup>

Dugout canoes were common in the prehistoric South. The canoes were built in a similar fashion but out of different woods depending on what was available regionally. In order to build the canoe, the Natives burned the trunk of a tree until it fell. Next, they would burn the branches off and place the log on frameworks of wooden posts designed to hold the canoe off the ground. They removed the bark through setting a fire underneath the canoe. The Indians used shell and stone tools to shape the canoe's outside.

They hollowed out the canoe by setting a fire inside it and then by scraping the inside with tools. They alternated between scraping and burning. Mud was placed at the ends and sides to help control these fires.<sup>2</sup>



1590. Hand-Colored Engraving by Theodor de Bry of "The Manner of Making Boats" by John White, The Mariners' Museum/CORBIS

Hundreds of prehistoric canoes have been found in waterlogged sites in coastal North Carolina and were perhaps used during seasonal visits to areas where specific resources were available. Keeping the canoes in the water would have helped to preserve them and would have served to hide the canoes. Several people could sit or stand

inside a dugout canoe even while carrying a considerable amount of cargo with them. The canoes were used for hunting, fishing, and for transporting food and raw materials.<sup>3</sup>



1590, Hand-Colored Engraving by Theodor de Bry of "Their Manner of Fishing in Virginia" by John White, Mariners' Museum/CORBIS

The people that produced the dugout canoe at the museum are classified as the Waccamaw Siouan Indians and at this time period, they belonged to the cultural phase called Cape Fear during the Middle Woodland Period (300 B.C. – A.D. 800). The Waccamaw Siouan also inhabited Brunswick County. Most of what is known about this cul-



Middle Woodland Pottery, Top Row: Hanover Pottery, Bottom Row: Cape Fear Pottery, *Time Before History*

ture relates to pottery and burial practices. The culture used either pottery mixed with grog in which archaeologists call "Hanover" or a pottery mixed with sand called "Cape Fear."

"Grog" refers to either particles of crushed pottery shards or fired clay lumps. They produced the pottery by coiling long ropes of clay and smoothing them out with paddles wrapped in cord or fabric, which left patterns. The pots were used to store and prepare food.<sup>4</sup>

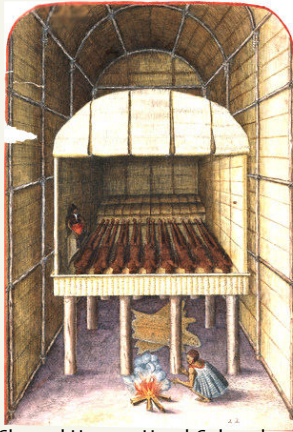
During this period, the Waccamaw Siouan began an intense focus on the use of resources along estuaries. At their archaeological sites, they left large amounts of shellfish along with terrestrial animals like deer. They used deer hides for clothing, containers, and coverings; and the bones for awls, needles, and fish hooks. Archaeologists believe that a majority of the prehistoric sites represent temporary settlements for the purpose of obtaining and processing marine resources like shellfish.<sup>5</sup>

It is unclear what forms of housing this culture used. In Carteret County, post holes have been found near Hanover pottery. These post holes indicate that structures measuring around 15 feet in diameter may have existed. Scientists suggest that the structures may have represented semi-permanent shelters for people that came to find oysters and go fishing.<sup>6</sup>

Other archeological sites found suggest that people also died while visiting their fishing camps or were brought there for burial. These people were supplied with a variety of grave goods. One burial site for two people, in Carteret, included two Hanover pottery vessels, eight turtle shells, a deer antler and leg bone, a beaver tooth, and a conch shell. Another Carteret site included a mass

cremation of ten people with marginella shell beads and perforated canine teeth.<sup>7</sup>

Burial sites in the southern Cape Fear region consist of sand mounds. Most sand burial mounds are between 25 and 50 feet in diameter and they are usually about 3 feet high, although some have been reported to have been as high as 15 feet before being plowed down. All of these mounds are described as being located on low sand ridges some distance away from habitation sites. The number of people buried within the mounds ranges from 10 to over three-hundred. The sites contain secondary burials or cremations. Secondary burials were those of individuals whose flesh had been removed prior to interment. It is believed that after death, these natives placed the bodies in charnel houses or scaffolds where they lay for a period of time to decompose. Then the bones were collected in bundles and buried in these sand mounds.<sup>8</sup>



Charnel House. Hand-Colored Engraving by Theodor de Bry After "The Tomb of Their Weroans or Chief Lords" by John White, The Mariners' Museum/ CORBIS

tained grave offerings placed with specific bundles or scattered throughout the mound. The offerings included bone and shell beads, chipped-stone and antler arrow points, pottery shards, animal bones, grinding stones, paint pigments, and stone smoking pipes. Archeologists agree that more research in these mounds needs to be conducted in order to determine their relationship to the Native culture.<sup>9</sup>



Stone pipes and clay pots from McLean Mound, *Time Before History*

The museum's canoe fragment is truly a remarkable artifact. It provides a glimpse of the Waccamaw Siouan who inhabited Southeastern North Carolina; fished the coast; buried their dead in sand mounds with meaningful items; and constructed fascinating tools, jewelry, pipes, and canoes. Perhaps with more archaeological excavation and study, more of the Waccamaw Siouan's story within North Carolina's prehistory will emerge.

Notes

1. NC Maritime Museum at Southport, Indian Canoe Collections Record.
2. Ian W. Brown, *Bottle Creek: A Pensacola Culture Site in South Alabama* (Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 2003), 195-196.
3. *Ibid.*, 197.
4. H. Trawick Ward, *Time before History: The Archaeology of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 204-205.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, 206.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*

### Getting the Word Out...

Throughout the year, Museum staff provide presentations about the museum for regional organizations and clubs. Recently Zach Zuehlke spoke at the St. Philips Men's Club in Southport. Zach brought a few artifacts from the shipwreck, *The City of Houston*; and also a sperm whale tooth. Mary Strickland ventured out of the museum to attend the Cape Fear Chapter #3, United Daughter's of the Confederacy February meeting. Mary was presented with a copy of *NC Women of the Confederacy* from President Charlotte Kelly.



Mary Strickland and Charlotte Kelly at the UDC Meeting



Staff Member, Naomi Winkelman providing a tour for a Southport Police Department's Outreach Program. Pictured with the outreach participants are Cheryl Hayes, Naomi Winkelman, Chief Jerry Dove, Officer Mike Simmons, Sergeant Gary Smith, and Mark Sutherland from City of Southport Parks and Recreation

## HISTORY MATTERS

### THE MULLET WRAPPER



North Carolina  
*Maritime Museum*  
at Southport

#### FOM, NC Maritime Museum at Southport

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The NC Maritime Museum is part of the Division of State History Museums, Office of Archives and History, an agency of the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources.

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MUSEUM

In sponsoring this newsletter, the *Friends of the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport* supports the museum in continuing North Carolina's rich maritime history.

Join us today...Welcome Aboard!

FOM

#### Museum Hours

Tuesday - Saturday

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Free Admission

### U P C O M I N G P R O G R A M S A N D E V E N T S

Tuesday, March 17, 2009, 7:00 PM – *“Bald Head Island Conservancy”* - Suzanne Dorsey  
(Sponsored by Walt & Joan Madsen)

Tuesday, April 21, 2009, 7:00 PM – *“USS NC Memorial & History of Wooden Ships from 1800s to present -Including the USS NC Submarine ”* - Dave Scheu  
(Sponsored by Cecil Rhodes)

Tuesday, May 12, 2009, 7:00 PM (NOTE ON SECOND TUESDAY) – *“Shore Birds”* - James Parnell  
(Sponsored by *Endless Summer* Sailing Charters)

Tuesday, June 16, 2009, 7:00 PM – *“Confederate POW's”* - Richard Triebe

Tuesday, July 21, 2009, 7:00 PM – *“Family Pirate Night”* - Marsha Tennant

Tuesday, August 18, 2009, 7:00 PM – *“Robert Ruark”* - Elmer Norwood

Tuesday, October 20, 2009, 7:00 PM – *“A Colonial Apparition”* - Cast of Thousands  
(Sponsored by Randy Jones)

Tuesday, November 17, 2009, 7:00 PM – *“Here's Celia”* - Celia Rivenbark

*All Tuesday programs are free and held at the Southport Community Building unless otherwise noted.*



FOM

North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport

P. O. Box 11101

Southport, NC 28461

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