



# Walkertown Area Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2

Summer 2014

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 **Date Set for Annual Potluck Picnic & Silent Auction**
- 2 ***Yadkin Valley Magazine* to Feature WAHS in Jul/Aug, 2014, Issue**
- 2 **Getting to Know Your Archives, Part II**
- 2 **Mark Your Calendars for September WAHS Meeting**
- 3 **WAHS Receives Donation of Rare, Circa 1930, Arco Wand Central Vacuum**
- 3 **First Home Erected at Walkertown**
- 4 **Haunted Walkertown**

## A Note from the Editor

The first issue of the Walkertown Area Historical Society newsletter has come and gone and, from the feedback we received, it appears that it was a successful venture. Barb Belger sent us an especially poignant note that reminded us of deceased WAHS member, Jane Morris: "Since Jane became too weak to communicate before she passed away last year, I have not had my regular 'Walkertown fix' and I am thrilled to know y'all will be writing and emailing a quarterly newsletter. I will print and save them all! Thank you so much." Chris Hilton commented on the story we included about the old Morris homeplace writing: "I am Walter Morris's great grandson. My grandmother was his daughter Carrie, wife of Gaither Maude Hilton former railroad agent in Walkertown." Thank you Barb and Chris and all the others who took time to send us comments. We hope this second newsletter will not be a letdown for our readers. Again, for those who wish to comment on any aspect of the newsletter, feel free to do so by email at [info@WalkertownAreaHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:info@WalkertownAreaHistoricalSociety.org) or you can

send your thoughts to me, Mike Marshall, newsletter editor at [mmarshall13@triad.rr.com](mailto:mmarshall13@triad.rr.com).

## Preserve Historic Forsyth Holds Annual Meeting in Walkertown

On Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, Preserve Historic Forsyth (PHF) Inc., a nonprofit membership organization founded in 2007 to provide a citizen voice for historic preservation in the county, held its annual membership meeting in Walkertown. With clear skies and temperatures in the 80s, the weather was perfect for the event. Festivities began with a welcome by Walkertown Mayor, Kenneth "Doc" Davis, followed by a slide show presentation on the history of Walkertown given in the fellowship hall at Love's United Methodist Church. Then, after a tour of the church's beautiful sanctuary, attendees made their way down the street to the 1891 Thomas A. Crews house, which was open for guided tours, as were several other structures on the property. Collectively, the Crews house complex represents a well-preserved collection of outbuildings documenting the turn-of-the-century tobacco industry in Walkertown. The house itself is a beautifully restored Queen Anne-style home which won the 2008 Historic Resources Commission Heritage Award in the Large-Scale Residential category. The property is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is designated a Forsyth County Local Historic Landmark. There was also a large display of Walkertown tobacco memorabilia on the back porch of the Crews house courtesy of long-time collectors Clarke Stephens and Wayne Biby. Guests were also able to enjoy a wonderful selection of refreshments that were served under the shade of the many old trees dotting the lawn of the Crews house. All in all, it was a wonderful event, not to mention an honor for Walkertown to be selected as the venue for the PHF annual meeting. We would especially like to thank Sallie Crews Johnson and Nancy Crews Moretz, owners of the Crews house, for graciously opening it to the public and hosting the PHF event. Thank you very much.

## **Date Set for Annual Potluck Picnic & Silent Auction**

The Walkertown Area Historical Society will once again hold its annual potluck supper and silent auction. The event will take place on Saturday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, at the WAHS Center & Museum located at 3058 Church Street.

The event has been well attended in the past and it is hoped that a large turnout will be present this time. As always, the silent auction will feature a number of worthwhile items and we're hoping the bidding will be highly competitive since all proceeds will go to support the society's efforts to research, organize, and preserve the history of Walkertown and the surrounding area.

If you have items you would like to donate to the auction fundraiser, please let one of the members of the WAHS board know.

## **Yadkin Valley Living Magazine to Feature WAHS in Jul/Aug Issue**

As noted in the last edition of the newsletter, *Yadkin Valley Living Magazine* carried a story in its Jan/Feb, 2014, issue about the WAHS cookbook. Now, thanks to an invitation from the magazine's editor, Barbara Norman, the Society will be featured again, this time in the Jul/Aug issue. This is an important opportunity for the Society to reach a wider audience and tell them about our many on-going history and preservation efforts and we appreciate the attention. For those who cannot find a print copy of the magazine when that issue is released, a digital copy will be posted on-line at their website, [www.yadkinvalleyliving.com](http://www.yadkinvalleyliving.com).

## **Getting to Know Your Archives, Part II**

The last issue of the newsletter provided readers with an overview of the WAHS archival collection of documents, photographs, artifacts, oral histories, and other material relating to the history of Walkertown and its citizens.

It was also noted that the collection was broken down into twenty-six collections. Their titles are as follows: Accountability, Agriculture, Art, Artifacts, Books, Certifications, Church, Civic, Commercial, Correspondence, Legal, Events, Family Albums, Genealogy, History, Interviews, Maps, Programs, Railroad, References, Resident, School, Scrapbook, Social, Sports, and U.S. Mail. It is reasonably clear from some of the titles the sorts of things they include, e.g., Correspondence, Genealogy, Interviews, Books, and

Maps. The titles of other collections are not so transparent. What, for example, does the collection called Accountability contain? The answer is that it includes items dealing with births, cemeteries, census data, obituaries, weddings, gravestones, death notices, and county records of various types. Another category, Art, includes drawings, paintings, sketches, models, sculpture, and needlework. The Railroad collection has information on things like depots and stations—connected with Walkertown, of course. The Reference collection includes directories, surveys, government documents, how-to articles, and other material. The Events collection includes information on fires, expositions, family reunions, plays, storms, parades, camps, and meetings.

The archives collection called Interviews contains sessions digitally recorded with a wide variety of individuals connected with Walkertown and his history. A few of those interviewed include Jerry Amos, Neva Bishop, Evelyn Fulp, Linda Keeter, Harrison Krites, and Jack Marshall.

The best way to find out exactly what the archives contains is to visit the WAHS house and browse the finding guide, which is resident on the personal computer there. You will be surprised at the wide variety of interesting information that has already been collected.

Remember, the archival collection is still growing as new material is added. If you have some important or interesting historical document, photo, or other material connected with Walkertown and you don't know what to do with it, consider donating it to the archives. Doing so will ensure that others will have access to it in the future.

## **Mark Your Calendars for September WAHS Meeting**

The next meeting of the WAHS at the library will take place on Tuesday, September 16, 2014. The speaker will be Dr. Douglas R. Porter.

Douglas, who is from Mount Airy, in Surry County, received his M.A. in history from North Carolina State University and his Ph.D. degree in history from the University of Mississippi. He is currently the Historic Sites Manager for the City of Raleigh.

His talk, which is entitled "Faith and Identity in the Upcountry," will focus on the relationship between religion and dissent (particularly opposition to slavery and the Confederate cause) in the upcountry region during the antebellum and Civil War eras. The general area in and around Forsyth, Guilford, Surry, and Yadkin counties were well known during the American Civil War and are of particular interest to Dr. Porter.

Look for additional information in the next issue of the WAHS newsletter on what will doubtless be a very interesting presentation that you will not want to miss.

## WAHS Receives Donation of Rare, Circa 1930, Arco Wand Central Vacuum

The WAHS archives recently acquired a most interesting household appliance—an early, and extremely rare central vacuum cleaner. Called the Arco Wand Vacuum Cleaner, it was patented about 1914 and made by the American Radiator Company. The company merged with the Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company in 1929 to become what is now known as American Standard—a company that makes sinks, toilets, bath tubs, and other miscellaneous plumbing fixtures.

The vacuum cleaner was donated by WAHS member and former president, Elizabeth Baird Barnette, and her husband, Minor Barnette, who found it in the basement of their Walkertown home. Their house was built about 1930 by Dr. Albert D. Edwards and his wife, Maude Pharr Edwards. Dr. Edwards, who died February 15, 1934, is buried in the cemetery at Love's United Methodist Church along with his wife who died on October 7, 1978.

It is believed that the Arco Wand central vacuum system was installed when the house was built as there are capped vacuum hose outlets in the upstairs and downstairs halls which must have been placed there during construction.

According to an article that appeared in the [Vacuum & Sewing Dealers Trade Association](#), a similar machine was donated to the Vacuum Cleaner Museum in St. James, Missouri, which houses many of the world's rarest vacuums. Tom Gasko, the museum's director, called the Arco Wand central vacuum from 1914 "a jewel of the museum." According to the article linked above, the machine donated to the museum "is the only one of three known to exist, and the only one in a private collection that still runs. (The Cleveland Museum of Modern Art has a model displayed but it does not run.) The machine features a unique repulsion start motor and suction fan system similar to systems used by commercial truck-mounted carpet shampooers."

In fact, this central vacuum system was extremely costly even when it was introduced to the market; in 1914 this machine cost \$3,000. The high price was due to cast iron piping, brass inlet valves, installation and shipping. Back then, the average cost of a house was \$5,000 and a Ford Model T was just \$350. The Arco Wand's main competitor, the Hoover model 3, cost only \$85.

Getting the heavy machine out of the Barnette's basement was no small task, but Wayne Biby, Randy Yates, and Josh Falstreau were able to dismantle it and haul it up the basement stairs and out the back door. Our hats are off to them for their effort, and to Elizabeth and Minor for donating it to the WAHS archives.

## First Home Erected at Walkertown

As readers will recall, the first issue of the newsletter featured a story on an old Morris home in Walkertown that appeared in the Sunday, August 20, 1944, issue of the *Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel*. The piece, written by Harvey Dinkins, a long time radio and TV farm newscaster for station WSJS and WSJS-TV, was part of a series by Dinkins called "Landmarks of Northwest North Carolina."

This issue of the newsletter features another story in that series. This one is entitled "First Home Erected at Walkertown." It originally appeared in the Sunday, May 28, 1944, issue of the same paper. Again, thanks to Jerry Taylor for finding and transcribing this article, and making it available to us along with a picture of the home and the original photo caption that ran with the story.



This residence, once the home of Dr. Walker, for whom Walkertown was named, was the first home erected in what is now the town of Walkertown. Dr. Walker resided here a short time and then departed for the West to spend the remainder of his life. – (Staff Photo).

BY HARVEY DINKINS  
(Staff Writer)

The man who founded Walkertown got dissatisfied and left there while there was still plenty of elbow room. But he left a good house behind him. And the house is still standing.

The old Dr. Walker home—nobody seems to remember his first name—stands on the northeast corner of the intersection, where the new Winston-Salem-Walkertown Highway crosses the link road which runs past Love's Methodist Church.

F. E. Swain, who resides at 1004 South Hawthorne Road, Winston-Salem, owns the building now. He purchased it in February of 1943 and has renovated it thoroughly, restoring it to much the same conditions it

was when the celebrated Dr. Walker lived there, possibly a century ago. Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Welch now live in the house.

Dr. Walker must have been a restless soul. In the early part of the last century he owned 847 acres of land, a flour and corn mill on Lick Creek and had an excellent country practice in what is now the Dennis community.

Squire J.A. Marshall, elderly citizen of the community, recalls facts about Dr. Walker, as they were related to him when a boy. It seems that the energetic doctor became dissatisfied with the prosaic life he was leading and several times was on the verge of selling out and going west. He was dissuaded from the venture a number of times by Col. Henry Marshall, grandfather of Squire Marshall. Finally, however, he would not be dissuaded and Colonel Marshall paid him the price he asked for his 847 acres of land - \$900 in cash for more than a square mile of what is now some of the best land in Forsyth County.

Having disposed of his huge estate, he climbed aboard his covered wagon and headed west. But he didn't go far. Coming to the crossroads at what is now the town that is named for him he decided he wouldn't go west at all! He bought land and started a residence.

Having finished the house he resided there for only a brief time and then left for the West sure enough. He lived the remainder of his life in one of the Western States, returning to Forsyth County only a time or two on a visit.

Eventually, Ed W. Linville purchased the property and he and Mrs. Linville lived there the remainder of their lives. Before so many years, Mrs. Linville took a little niece, Henrietta Jones, daughter of Bunyan Jones, to live with her. The little girl had been orphaned when quite small. She later married F. E. Swain and it is they who now own the old Walker residence.

Linville, incidentally, added to his property substantially through the years and at one time owned most of the land where Walkertown now stands. He sold off much of the property in his later years.

Much of the original landscaping about the house is still intact. The old fashioned boxwoods are vigorous and thrifty and, with the care they are now getting, doubtless will live for many years to come.

The residence has all of the characteristics of ante bellum construction. The timbers are put together with dowel pins. The finished lumber is hand planed. The ceiling is of the finest forest pine. The rooms are all large.

Having been brought to a good state of repair by its present owner, the house apparently is good for a second century of use and possibly many more.

Editor's note: For readers who have a copy of the book *Images of America: Walkertown*, there is another picture of the Dr. Walker house there on page 42. The caption of this photo reads: "The Walker-Linville house was located at the corner of U.S. 311 and Friendly Road.

This was the home of Dr. Robert Walker, who was one of the first postmasters in Walkertown. It is believed a later owner was Edward Linville, who was also one of the earliest postmasters."

Other research, however, seems to suggest that the Dr. Walker who owned the house was Dr. William Walker. The 1991 Walkertown bicentennial book states that the house belonged to the Dr. William Walker who appears in the 1850 federal census and that there is "a deed to show he purchased the house that stood at the intersection of Friendly Road and New Walkertown Road from David Walker's estate." It also recites that he had moved there from the Dennis area of the county.

Other research also suggests that it was Dr. William Walker who owned the house discussed in the Dinkins article. That research shows that he was born October 19, 1804 in Stokes County (Forsyth was formed from Stokes in 1849) and died February 12, 1881 in Henry County, Missouri. His wife was Elizabeth B. Vanhoy, and there is a Stokes County marriage bond dated October 15, 1823 for the marriage of William Walker and Elizabeth B. Vanhoy. John T. Blackburn was the bondsman and C.L. Banner the witness.

William and his family left Walkertown some time after the 1850 census was compiled, but were in Missouri by the time the 1860 census was taken. Dr. Walker is buried at Stone's Chapel Cemetery in Montrose, Henry County, Missouri. Other Walkers also removed to Missouri about the same time and some of them are discussed in the book *History of Henry County Missouri* by Uel W. Lamkin (1919) which is available on-line for those who might be interested.

## Haunted Walkertown

Have you ever noticed that the ceilings of the large porches on many old southern homes are painted a soft blue-green? In fact, it's a color often referred to by old-timers as "Haint Blue." Haint is a variation of the word "haunt," and the color got its name from the belief that it could ward off any haints that might be lurking around the house. For those who are not steeped in the lexicon of the paranormal, haints are lost souls, or the restless spirits of the dead. And it seems that even Walkertown might have a few of them. While writing the pictorial history of Walkertown published by Arcadia Press, some of the authors were told about houses in and around town that were, well, they were haunted. That led to the idea of doing a book on Haunted Walkertown and work is underway to compile these stories for future publication. If you have any spooky tales of your own you would like to contribute, let us know by email ([walkertownlore@aol.com](mailto:walkertownlore@aol.com)), or by phone: 336-416-1968. Don't forget to provide your contact information.

**DUES REMINDER:** Annual dues are payable by July 1 of each year and apply July 1 through June 30.