

“Man living
in harmony
with nature.”

– B.W. Wells



Rockcliff Farm Quarterly

THE B.W. WELLS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Spring is on its way! I know because I saw my first robin earlier in the week. Not only that but the Winter Aconite and Sweet Breath of Spring has been in bloom for a month and many different types of crocus are up. I am very relieved after the winter we have had.

Heritage Day is just around the corner scheduled for March 26. Hugh Nourse is exerting his creativity and Yeoman's effort by mounting a new addition to Activities for Children by adding an activity of

Kite making and Kite flying. Brian Bockhahn reports that he has all of the tour guides arranged so we are looking forward to another great day. Johnny Randall and Ken Moore from the N.C. Botanical Garden will again favor us with a free raffle of native plants from the garden. The continuing mystery relates to what the Mother Nature will present to us this year. Please go to our website www.bwwells.org for scheduling details. We hope to see a good crowd of you.

Our Rewiring Project has been completed, and we now have electricity for both the studio and main house. MANY thanks to Bill Howard, the

Wake County Historical Society and Chris Yarletts, CLY Electric, who not only did the work but also contributed over \$700 in materials! Chris is the only contractor I have ever known who gives you an estimate based on “worst case scenario”, then reduces the price from there. The entire rewiring project cost us much less than feared with the result we have money to devote to additional projects. We are now assessing building needs and plans for further restoration work. A summary of repair plans appears in this newsletter.

We are grateful for the support provided by a number of members as a result of our December fund raiser. All of these funds will contribute directly to our continuing efforts to carry out restoration projects.

– John Pelosi

HERITAGE DAY!

**Saturday,
March 26th 2011**

Time:

9am – 5pm

Location:

Rockcliff Farm

Pioneer ecologist B.W. Wells always took the opportunity to educate people about their natural surroundings. The B.W. Wells Association continues his tradition by offering hikes, tours and information pertaining to the ecology of Rockcliff Farm.

Whether you want to learn about 19th century farm life, take a wildflower walk with a guide or hike to Zeagle's Rock, Heritage Day offers something for everyone. There are ecological games for the kids, educational exhibits, and a plant raffle.

Rockcliff Farm is open for guided tours only, so don't miss this opportunity. The entire event is FREE. We hope to see you there!

**Find the Heritage Day
Schedule online by
clicking on
“EVENTS CALENDAR”
and download the flyer.**



**Botanist Ken Moore holding plant raffle
at the 2010 Heritage Day.**

N.C. FRIENDS OF STATE PARKS

It is with a little embarrassment that I have to admit that I was not even aware of the N.C. Friends of State Parks (NCFSP) group until recently. How could such a group have slipped under my radar for so long? Presumably it slipped past many of you too. While our B.W. Wells Association is an accredited friends group that supports the Falls Lake State Recreation Area, the NCFSP supports parks state-wide. The website is attractive and informative. I would encourage each of you to support NCFSP, and to visit the website www.ncfsp.org.

Another surprise was to learn that NCFSP holds quarterly meetings that are hosted by a different state park each time. To my delight, I learned that the next event will be held on the last Saturday in April at Singletary Lake state park, located in the Bladen Lakes area, west of Clinton and south of Fayetteville. Singletary Lake is a fascinating site, one of the chain of “Carolina Bays” presumably formed by meteoritic strikes and explosions, ten thousand years ago. Jerry Reynolds of the N.C. Museum of Natural Science includes it in his tour “In the Footsteps of B.W. Wells”.

The lake is in the Sandhills region, where the soil is loose and almost white. The air-burst of the meteorite excavated the area, pushing a huge volume of sand towards the southeast. Today one finds a tranquil blue lake with a white sand bottom, and picturesque cypress trees growing in the water.

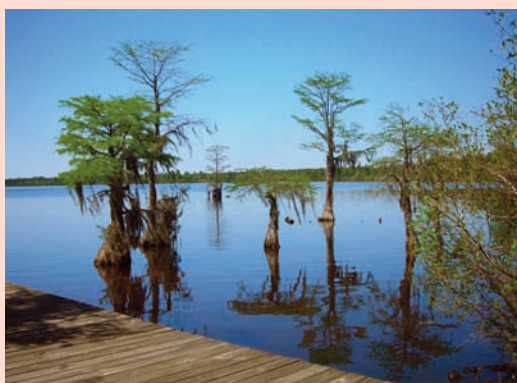
On the south-east there is an incredible white sand area that in the heat of summer resembles the edge of a desert. This is a fantastic place to visit, of interest for its flora, birds and geology. It is a paradise for photographers.

The NCFSP undertakes projects with parks located all across the state, including either activities or funding. These range from participating at park festivals, to searching for educational grants, and on-site trail preparation. Join in!

—Hughen Nourse



Left: Turkey Oaks predominate in the white desert that is scorching in the summer. Right: Lake Singletary boasts blue water and cypress trees.



A lone Cypress Tree on a hummock.



Virginia Pennywort (*Obolaria virginica*)

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 2011

Saturday, March 5 (2pm)

Location: Rockcliff Farm
B.W. WELLS HISTORY HIKE
Celebrate B.W. Wells' 126th birthday with a traditional hike and tour of Rockcliff Fam.
Email to RSVP.

Wed., March 16 (9am – 12pm)

Location: Rockcliff Farm
VOLUNTEER TRAIL AND GROUNDS WORK DAY

Help prepare the trails and grounds for Heritage Day. Numerous trail and building projects will be completed. Email to RSVP.

Sunday, March 20 (9am – 12pm)

Location: State Road 1919
ADOPT A HIGHWAY
BENT ROAD CLEAN UP DAY
Help keep SR1919 clean and free of trash. Email to RSVP.

APRIL 2011

Sunday, April 17 (2pm)

Location: Mitchell Mill Park
Zebulon, N.C.

WILDFLOWER WALK

Hugh Nourse will lead a trip to view unique wildflowers.
Email to RSVP.

>>EVENTS continued on page 3.

EARLY HISTORY OF ROCKCLIFF FARM HIGHLIGHTED

One of the delights resulting from our membership and fund raiser drives is to hear from some of the earlier members. The association has gained much additional information about the property and its history in this way. A current example is hearing from Marilyn Pergerson from Greensboro whose great-great-grandfather was Joseph Newton Lowery. Mr. Lowery began farming the property in the 1800s and he called the 144 acres Holly Hill back then.



Mrs. Pergerson writes: "As a child I visited great Aunt Della Ray there. My great-great grandfather, Joseph Newton Lowery and my great grandmother, Cleo Patra "Pate" Lowery are buried there. Newt married twice (probably sisters who were daughters of William Bailey). I believe that Elizabeth Bailey Lowery died in childbirth when "Pate" was born. Newt married Elmoline Bailey Lowery, father of Aunt Dell Lowery Ray (wife of Charlie Ray). Pate's husband, Wiley Thomas Glenn was not buried there because the horse got stuck in the mud several times at Pate's burial. He is buried in Henderson."

The following passage is from the Homeplace newsletter published by Mrs. Pergerson and her family about their history. We are very pleased to make this connection and add vital information to the history of Rockcliff Farm.

—John Pelosi

Saturday, April 23 (2pm – 5pm)
 Location: Rockcliff Farm
WILDFLOWER KAYAK TRIP
 Hugh Nourse will lead a paddling trip to Wyatt's Bend to view painted buckeye in bloom and the unique geology around Rockcliff Farm.

MAY 2011
 Sunday, May 29 (2pm)
 Location: Bishops Grant, Wake Forest, N.C.
 Wildflower walk led by Hugh Nourse.
 Email to RSVP.

If you'd like to participate in an event, please RSVP by sending an e-mail to the designated address by clicking on the link.
<http://www.bwwells.org/calendar.html>



Lowery Home Still Standing

Pearl Bagwell loved to go to her Grandma Lowery's House

Joseph Newton Lowery and Emoline Bailey Lowery made their home on the 144.2 acre tract in the Bent of the Neuse at the old Buck Mangum homeplace. Newton & "Emily" raised a houseful of children there including "Pate" Lowery, more formerly known as Cleo Patra Sarah Louise Lowery. "Pate" grew up to marry a neighbor on the other side of the river by the name of Wiley Thomas Glenn. These two became the parents of "Pearl" Bagwell (Pearly Maiden Glenn Bagwell, wife of Dallis Lee Bagwell.) *and was my mother's mother.*

Census records, marriage records and tombstones can sometimes help to piece together a family story even when important pieces are missing. This story is reasoned in just that way.

Joseph Newton Lowery and Elizabeth Bailey (his first wife) were married in 1852. They had four children: Roxanna, Alfred G., James F. and Cleo Patra Louise.

It is reasonable to believe that Eliza-

beth died in childbirth when little "Pate" was born in 1865. What is known is that "Pate" was born that September and that her father married Emoline Bailey in June of 1866. During these days, about half of all women died in childbirth, so this is a reasonable assumption. Emily may even have been Elizabeth's younger sister but if so, this record has not yet been found.

By the 1870 census, Newton and Emily Lowery had two additional children; Charlie N. and an infant. They are shown in the census to be living in the Newlight Township of Wake County near the Falls of the Neuse.

The infant would have been Henry C. Lowery according to the 1880 census. And by 1880 there were two more children: Mary B. and Della. William Ray and a Negro blacksmith by the name of Lindolph Hockaday also resided on the homeplace.

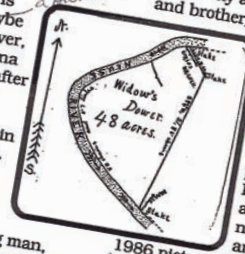
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Newton lived to be 74 years old but Emily, eight years his junior, outlived him. Newton is buried in the yard on the homeplace in the Bent of the Neuse. Emily inherited a widow's dower of 48 acres in the Bent. Her dower was one third of the estate including the home and all outbuildings, but she is not buried there. (Maybe she remarried?) However, the oldest child, Roxanna died in 1902, the year after her father died and was buried near him on the property near the house in the homeplace graveyard. ("Rockie's" husband, Calvin Keith, is not buried there.)

In the meantime, the young man, Wiley Thomas Glenn from across the river had married "Pate" Lowery and they were raising their own family. "Pate" and Wiley Thomas began raising their brood on a little piece of his parents' farm until Wiley went to work in the nearby cotton mill. But Wiley's arthritis got worse and the children had to take over his mill work. "Pearl" was twelve years old when she, Betty and Joe (her younger sister and brother) began work in Durham at the cotton mill there.

When "Pate" died at 54 years old, she was buried near her father in the Lowery homeplace graveyard at the Bent. The tombstones are still standing very near the house within an iron fence. *Aunt Della?*

1986 picture of the house includes "Pate" & Wiley's granddaughter, Myrtle Bagwell Poole. (The kitchen & bedrooms were under separate roofs joined by an enclosed breezeway.)



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WAKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROVIDES GRANT FOR REWIRING

When Bill Howard became President of the Wake County Historical Society he decided to carry out a project to benefit the B.W. Wells Association. Bill approached Scott Kershner, Superintendent of Falls Lake State Recreation Area and the boards of both organizations with this in mind. The result was Bill's decision to develop a project to rewire both the studio and the Wells house.

Planning and carrying out such projects is attended with many complications. Bill persevered through the review and approval process with all relevant agencies and groups to get the project underway—an effort that lasted beyond his presidency with WCHS.

At the January WCHS Board Meeting, Ray Hinnant, current president recommended that the Society grant the B.W. Wells Association a sum of \$2500 for the rewiring project. The association deeply thanks Bill Howard and the Wake County Historical Society for their significant contribution to our preservation efforts at Rockcliff Farm.

—John Pelosi

REPAIRS AT ROCKCLIFF FARM

In December, the Building Committee of the B.W. Wells Association made an assessment of each of the buildings and most of the structures at Rockcliff Farm. The group examined the main house and kitchen, studio, Ray House, smokehouse, and the shed across the drive from the Ray House. The purpose of the assessment is to create a list of work items for each of the buildings and structures. The list is currently being prioritized by the board. Work items that preserve the building from the elements, such as roof repair, structural stabilization and termite treatment are given a high priority; whereas, aesthetic work items, such as painting and sheet-rock are rated lower.

The board looks to continue its excellent working relationship with the Falls Lake State Recreation Area and to fund additional work around the site. Wiring of the main house and studio were recently completed, and just a few years ago the outhouse was reconstructed and the main house porch was repaired.

Listed below are some of the work items that the Building Committee feels need to be addressed relatively soon: prepare and

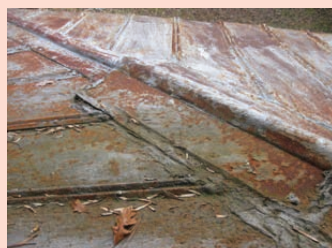
repaint the 5V metal roofs; repair damaged siding on the main house where the connector attaches; install matching siding where missing on the main house and Ray House; repair and cap chimneys and flues; and treat all buildings and structures for termites; repair the smokehouse and shed.

—Jeff Adolphson

Below: The 5V metal roofs will need to be prepared for painting. Loose pans will need to be reattached and tar and most rust will need to be removed before painting.

Damaged siding on the main house at the kitchen connector will need to be repaired. The wall cavity will also need to be examined for any possible damage.

Chimneys and flues will need to be repaired and capped.



WINTER FUND RAISER 2010-2011

The association is very lucky to be comprised of members whose generosity contributes to the task of preserving and improving Rockcliff Farm. The Board of Directors is grateful to those of you who responded to our Annual Winter Fund Raiser.

This year the association received donations from: Herb and Pat Amyx, Marti Kane, John Myhre, Elizabeth Reid Murray, Larry and Renee Earley, Ken Moore and Kathy Buck, JoAnn Rogers, Ginger and Fred Reynolds, Jeff Adolphsen, Betty Lazo, Jackie Staeheli, Richard and Daphne Wetzel and Ken and Carmen Samples. We also received a donation from Michael and Cheryl Patrick and from Hugh Nourse in memory of Ed Bradley, one of the early and very active members of the association. Chris Yarletts, the electrician who rewired the Wells house and studio made a substantial donation in the form of material for the job.

The total amount of donations amounts to \$1205. All funds will be used for improvements and renovations at Rockcliff Farm. Certain repairs are needed on each of the different buildings. A report on assessing the restoration needs of the buildings is in another section of this newsletter. (See page 4.)

—John Pelosi



On a lighter note...

President John Pelosi and board member Liz Ford at the 2010 Annual Meeting. And thanks to Johnny Randall for his excellent artwork!



Right: Rockcliff Farm after the December 2010 snowfall.

MISSION STATEMENT

The B.W. Wells Association will strive to educate the public about B.W. Wells, North Carolina's first plant ecologist, and promote his conservation ethics. The Association will achieve its mission primarily by assisting the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to preserve, restore and interpret the unique cultural and natural resources at Rockcliff Farm, the site of Wells' retirement.



Join today!

BENEFITS:

- > Organized walks and lectures pertaining to the ecology, geology and botany
- > Maintained hiking trails
- > Interpretive displays
- > Meetings and newsletters
- > Environmental Education projects for students of all ages

STUDENT AND SENIOR (60 years old) **\$10**

INDIVIDUAL **\$15**

FAMILY **\$30**

PATRON **\$50**

CLUB/PARTNER ORGANIZATION **\$75**

LIFE MEMBERSHIP **\$100** (limited to individuals only)

**BWWA, P.O. Box 1901
Wake Forest, NC 27588**

B.W. WELLS ASSOCIATION

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