

The Newsletter of the
**Friends of the
Camden Archives and Museum**
1314 Broad Street
Camden, SC 29020



Preserving the past for the future

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Photo from collection of Marion duPont Scott



Current Archives exhibit highlights local horse heritage

By Katherine H. Richardson
Camden Archives Deputy Director

In celebration of the Colonial Cup season and Camden's equestrian past and present, the Camden Archives and Museum has mounted a new exhibit featuring highlights of Kershaw County's "horse heritage".

Located at the Archives in the Whiteley Room, the exhibit will be up through the end of 2011. Distinct facets of that history are highlighted here to encourage readers to visit the Archives and tour this special exhibit.

The early history of Camden's equestrian community

The horse has been our transportation from time immemorial. Horse breeding is almost as old, as man had need for a huge, strong work animal or a lighter, faster small horse. Thoroughbreds were developed in England over 300 years ago, and the first reported to be imported to America came in 1730 to Virginia. Thoroughbreds were developed to race, thus the advent of horse racing in the American colonies.

In Camden these developments led to a way of life; horse racing was first recorded in Camden in 1802. The Camden Jockey Club incorporated in 1816. This club and the South Carolina Jockey Club insisted on proper race wear and colors for jockeys, a rule adopted from them by the Jockey Club of America. The Camden Jockey Club was still meeting in 1859 but apparently disbanded during the Civil War. They reincorporated on March 14, 1874.

The first race course in Camden occupied the ground now delineated by DeKalb, Mill, Laurens and Lytleton Streets. The grandstand was near the intersection of Laurens and Fair Streets. The second, known as the Hawthorn Course [the spelling in the 1859 Camden Jockey Club rules], lay north of town between Springdale Race Course and Cool Springs, most certainly on the level ground now dissected by the defunct Southern Railway. The Hawthorn Course site was acquired by Kirkover

and Woodward in their purchase for the Springdale Course in 1928.

The third course, in use until after the Civil War, was where Springdale is located today. This was surely the course mentioned in an 1873 notice in *The Camden Journal*. It read, "Mr. Ellerbe, Mr. Cantey, Mr. Sanders, and Mr. Ancrum, presided over racing at the Camden Course. The first day's weather was inauspicious, but into the next day buggies were rolling up Broad Street to the new track – just barely completed, but one of the best in the State and in fine racing condition. It was a gala week reuniting friends who had not met since the War. The gents were well mannered and the ladies provided a fair view as they surveyed the racing."

The Camden Polo Club

Polo in Camden was organized between 1898, when the game was first introduced to Camden by winter visitor and millionaire Rogers L. Barstow, and 1900, when the first Camden team played a game.

Barstow spied the level field behind the Hobkirk Inn and decided that it was the perfect spot for the game. The proprietor of the inn, Capt. G. W. Eldredge, agreed and announced that polo would have a profound impact on the tourist trade in Camden.

The newly organized team first tried playing on the present field, and then tested a field on the west side of Broad Street, before settling on the first location as a permanent home. The original sand field was sodded in 1899. By 1900 it was the perfect turf for this lively sport.

In 1902, Barstow bought 22 polo ponies for the Camden team, who were organized into The Reds and The Blues. The team played its first competition game against Aiken in 1902. By 1922, Camden boasted of its women's polo team in the April issue of *The Spur*.

The Camden Polo Club, chartered in 1900, is the fourth oldest in the United States. The Camden Polo Field is the second oldest playing field still in use in the country. The sport died out after 1959 but was

Continued on page 3

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Photographs courtesy of Camden
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Friends of the Camden Archives and Museum is a membership organization concerned with supporting programs, protecting a continually growing collection, and expanding the facility. The purpose of the Archives and Museum is to collect, organize, preserve, and make items of historical interest related to Camden and the surrounding areas available to the public.

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Story ideas, suggestions, and comments are welcomed and encouraged.

Camden Archives and Museum

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From the Chairman

Dear Friends:

Thank all of you for your terrific response to our last newsletter. Our membership is truly unique and very special.

As you go through this newsletter I trust you will get a real sense of the impact your memberships are having. Your tremendous support assists with projects and purchases that improve the offerings and preservation efforts of the Camden Archives. I'm looking forward with great interest to the many things planned for 2012.

Please take a moment now to renew your membership for the coming year. Your donation is tax deductible. More importantly, it gives the Archives staff the freedom to plan constant improvement for now and for future generations. Thank you for your continued support!

Stephen VanHorn
Chairman
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From the Director

We would like to welcome our newest employee, Katherine Richardson. Katherine is the former director of the Sumter County Museum and comes to us with a lot of experience and expertise. She will serve as deputy director, and her duties will include exhibit preparation, programming, and collections care. We are fortunate to have her on our staff.

We are expanding our educational programs at the Archives. A traveling exhibit from the South Carolina State Museum, The First South Carolinians, was featured in July and August. During September and October another traveling exhibit on Colonial Life was on display at our museum. We had four successful programs in conjunction with these exhibits: Flint Knapping, Colonial Cooking, Colonial Dress, and Historical Surveying. You can read about all of these on pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter.

We are in the process of upgrading our collections. This project will cost a lot of money, and your contributions help make this possible. A special thank you to our Friends members and to all who have made donations.

Howard Branham
Director
Camden Archives and Museum





One of the very special items on display in the Camden Archives' horse heritage exhibit is a photo book that belonged to Mrs. Marion duPont Scott. This vintage Carolina Cup photo as well as the photo of Camden fox hunters on page one are part of that collection.

Archives exhibit highlights local horse heritage -

Continued from page 1

revived in 1987 and continues to be a popular form of Camden's equestrian history. The resulting annual polo championship is known as The Camden Cup, which benefits the Fine Arts Center of Kershaw County.

The Camden Hunt

The Camden Hunt is the second oldest hunt club in South Carolina, having been recognized by the Master of Foxhound Association in 1926. This institution began in the aftermath of successful "drag" hunts held by "The Winter Colony" visitors in the mid-1920s.

The club was organized by Mrs. Dwight Partridge, Mrs. Robert Deans, Henry G. Carrison, Nelson Aziel, and Ralph Chase. Martha Partridge became the first Master of the Foxhounds. The club leased 2,300 acres for their hunting ground and built kennels. They also organized the Camden Junior Hunt to develop the next generations of horsemen and hunters. This group also holds a Junior Horse Show.

The Hunt Breakfasts held by the Camden Hunt after the last hunt of the season have become legendary. Camden Hunt's headquarters are presently located on Red Fox Road, northeast of Camden and their hunting grounds, known as the "Camden Hunt Country," contain 12,500 acres of preserved woodlands and sandhills.

Springdale Race Course

In 1928, Ernest L. Woodward, a New Yorker and winter resident of Camden, bought 1,181.75 acres of land northwest of the city limits of Camden with the intent of building a steeplechase racing course and training center. He and his friend Harry Kirkover, also from New York and a winter resident, developed the course over the next few years, and in 1930 they ran the first Carolina Cup races on the new Springdale Race Course. In the course's first years, the annual Washington's Birthday Race and the Camden Hunter Trials were held at the course, co-sponsored by Springdale and the Camden Hunt.

In 1954, Marion duPont Scott bought the Springdale property from Kirkover, adding this vast tract of land to her already established equestrian training center. For the next 29 years, she carefully nurtured equestrian development in Camden and at her home, Montpelier, in Virginia.

In 1970, Scott established the Colonial Cup at the course. This race holds the largest purse, at \$100,000, in the country. Eighty-three years after Woodward and Kirkover's dream of establishing a first rate steeplechase center, Camden is host to a large equestrian population for nine months of the year. Because of the foresight and determination of Woodward, Kirkover and Scott to promote steeplechase and preserve it as a sport, Springdale is one of the premier steeplechase sites in North America.

Horse Training and Boarding

Because horse racing was popular in this area as early as 1802, horse training and boarding began as a private enterprise. Its form as an industry began when Springdale Race Course was built in 1927-8. At that time, Kirkover and Woodward established a training center at the track, and such notable trainers as Tom Waller, North Fletcher, and Frank Whiteley have trained in Camden through the years.

In 1935 and 1936 Marion duPont Scott began amassing property

for her training center, now known as Camden Training Center. Her property included the old Camden Course, an old polo field, and the one and one-half mile track of the Camden Riding and Driving Club. Known as Wrenfield, her training facility contained at least 359.76 acres.

By 1969, Camden had 700 stalls available at the numerous training facilities and an untold number are here at the present time. This industry brings a workforce with it for nine months of the year, making a huge impact on the Kershaw County economy. The equestrian industry also contributes to the area's tourism industry by readying steeplechasers for the Carolina Cup and the Colonial Cup, which bring in a total of around 70,000 tourists each year.

Historic Preservation And the Equestrian Culture

The important equestrian culture in Kershaw County has produced premier examples of historic landscape preservation at work.

The Camden Hunt Country and the Polo Field have both brought statewide awards for preservation from the Palmetto Trust. The Springdale Race Course and Camden Training Center have preserved vast open spaces of countryside adjacent to Camden's older residential neighborhoods and sprawling suburbs.

These equine tracts of open land can be compared to the effect that Central Park has on the city of New York; Frederick Law Olmstead's vision of wide open spaces with green forests in the center of that urban jungle have been a saving grace for city-weary New Yorkers. Camden is not on that scale and likely never will be – but suburban development does gobble up desirable countryside all over South Carolina.

The Polo Field was in danger of being developed into a neighborhood of new houses when the Friends of the Polo Field, under the leadership of Charlie Cushman, Nancy Davis, and Rudy Kohn, raised the money to purchase the tract in partnership with Palmetto Trust. They received the Palmetto Trust Award of Merit in 2000.

Judy and Dale Thiel received the Palmetto Trust 2002 BMW Conservation Award in 2002 for their many years of crafting together the Camden Hunt Country. This 12,500 acre tract northeast of the city limits of Camden remains open countryside for the Camden Hunt Club activities. It is a tract of woodlands that contains creeks, wetlands, and the Camden watershed.

Kershaw County residents can be proud of the vision of the area's equestrian population, from the dreams of Kirkover and Woodward and Marion duPont Scott in the 1930s to the Thiels and the Friends of the Polo Field in the 21st century.

Taken as a whole, a unique blend of forces came together in Camden to foster this equine tradition. Camden at the turn of the 20th century already had a long and storied past revolving around horse racing, hunting, and breeding horses. Blended into that equation were wealthy winter visitors from the north, fabulous guest homes and hotels, the perfect geography for equine events, the luck of being on the main passenger railway line to the south, and a temperate climate. The most important thing that created the perfect environment for this tradition to develop was and is the gracious southern hospitality of the people of Kershaw County.



Exhibits and programs

Exhibits and educational programs have brought a number of visitors to the Archives in recent months. Cathy Jackson of Horatio looks over local Indian artifacts from a collection donated to the Archives by the late Lewis F. Anderson. Mackenzie Sholtz demonstrates 18th century dress and Jim Daniel discusses colonial surveying techniques in a series of classes offered by the Archives on the Colonial period. (See story on page 4.)



Valuable exhibit records life of ‘best horseman in United States’

**By Katherine H. Richardson
Camden Archives Deputy Director**

If objects can define a life, then the story of Frank Whiteley’s life resides at the Camden Archives and Museum. In a case on the outside wall of the educational/meeting room named in his honor are the objects associated with a lifetime of achievement and skill.

The story begins with an old photograph of a blond headed little boy holding the halter of a pony named Sled. It ends with a comfortable slouchy hat which was Whiteley’s signature apparel in his later days. In between are the silver trophies from numerous famous horses Whiteley trained and made champions – Ruffian, Damascus, Forego, and Tom Rolfe among them.

He has been said to have been the best horseman in the United States. Back that claim up with the testaments to that in the case – The Order of the Palmetto, awarded in 2003, International Citations for Tom Rolfe and Damascus, the metal plaque from his 1978 induction to the Racing Hall of Fame, and the many silver trophies shining behind the glass.

Frank Yewell Whiteley, Jr. was born in 1915 in Centerville, Maryland. He said that he always had a pony or a horse as a child and he was a born natural at working with horses. Self-taught, he received his trainer’s license in 1936. He made Camden his second home, coming here in 1965 to train his horses in winter at Springdale. Known for being a man of few words, he shied away from the fame which came with his achievements in the equestrian world.

Whiteley conditioned 35 stakes winners and trained four champion racers. He retired from training and racing in 1984, but made a daily visit

to the Camden Training Center for the rest of his days.

At age 90, Whiteley said, “I don’t play golf and don’t fish ... I go out to the race track to kill time just about every morning. I just look at ‘em. I don’t say anything. I just look at ‘em.” Whiteley passed away at age 93 in May of 2008 after a lifetime of quiet achievement.

As our eyes fall upon the leather harnesses of Forego and Ruffian in the Whiteley exhibit we come to the central theme of Frank Whiteley’s success in life – it all boils down to who holds the halter.



Frank Whiteley, above, as an adult and, at right, as a small boy holding the halter of a pony.



Camden Archives offers variety of educational programs

The Camden Archives and Museum sponsored in recent months a series of free and open to the public presentations. The Archives staff hopes to offer more presentations on historical topics in the future. Announcements of these special events are publicized in the local media and will be posted on the Archives' website at www.camdenarchives.org. Katherine Richardson, Archives Deputy Director, submitted the following reflections on recent programs.

Native American weapons

Native American weapons was the subject of a presentation at the Camden Archives and Museum in August that featured archaeologist Erica Shofner demonstrating "flint knapping" or producing projectile points.

The presentation was arranged in conjunction with an exhibit in the Whiteley room at the Archives on "The First South Carolinians." Also on display in the main gallery was the Archives' impressive exhibit of Native American artifacts.

Shofner is the Educational Director for the South Carolina Archaeology Public Outreach Division (or SCAPOD), a non-profit group whose mission is to educate the public about the importance of archaeology in the study of cultural heritage. During her presentation, she demonstrated

flint knapping and allowed participants to learn the art of using the atlatl, a spear thrower used to bring down large game.

18th Century Cooking

The smoke from a cook fire began to rise through the trees outside the Camden Archives on Sept. 30. This unaccustomed sight was the result of the 18th century cooking program held in conjunction with the colonial South Carolina exhibit which was on loan to the Camden Archives and Museum from the State Museum.

Between 35 and 40 people joined the archives staff and visiting living history demonstrators from the Sumter County Museum that morning. Participants tasted samples of foods such as mushroom catsup, corn fritters, venison, root stew, and apple pie. Participants agreed everything is better when cooked over a wood fire! They also learned that there was no such thing as "fast food" in that day and age. The chicken, stuffed with herbs and onions, roasting over the fire was not done until long after the class disbanded at noon.

18th Century Women's Dress and Undress!

The audience was warned, including the brave men who attended, that Sumter County historical clothing expert Mackenzie Sholtz would be taking it off and putting it on! From her undergarments to the finished outer layer, the gown, Sholtz demonstrated the evolution of dressing from 1770 to 1799. The good thing was that women always wore a first layer undergarment known as a chemise, or shift, which looks like a white linen nightgown. So at no time was this class too risqué!

Over the chemise went a corset, which shaped the body and dictated women's posture. Sholtz stressed that the chemise made women stand and carry themselves in proper position. She likened the comfort of them – yes, comfort – to a present-day back brace worn by workers who lift heavy loads. She noted that all of our conceptions of 18th century stance, dance, and gestures arise from the effect of the corset on the body.

From open robe gowns to the Backcountry work dress, all of the dresses demonstrated by Sholtz were drafted from actual textiles in museums. Her red colonial shoes were a hit, as well as the various hats she modeled. Three young ladies in attendance tried on every hat after the class. For those who enjoy 18th century history, this class was dress-up at its finest!

Surveying in Colonial America

Jim Daniel, a colonial surveying expert, instructed a dozen hardy souls on Oct. 6 in the art of "running the chains" and "sighting" with the plain compass as though they were colonial surveyors in the Backcountry of South Carolina.

Participants learned that in determining the "metes and bounds" of a piece of land they had to start with a physical point of reference – such as a large oak tree or a rock formation. For one colonial surveyor researched by Daniel, the point of reference was "the place I saw the big deer." Could you find that after 200 years?

Yes, there were pitfalls and complications to surveying in the colonial period. The chains expanded and contracted with the heat and cold, making measurements possibly hundreds of square feet off. The compass needle had to be just so to get an accurate reading. The chains had to be held level by two people or the measurement was off. Sometimes the point of one corner of a plat was located in impassible swamp.

It was not a job for the faint of heart – but then, according to Daniel, the surveyors generally had an ample supply of rum along with their equipment! He has checked historical records for their supply lists and said the most common items of food and drink taken into the field were corn, bacon, and rum – what a diet! A great time was had by all as we "surveyed" the side yard of the Archives and Museum – but no rum for this class!



Approximately 35 people attended a class held at the Archives demonstrating 18th century cooking. Participants sampled food cooked over a wood fire by Deborah Watts in period costume.

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