January 2026 Edition
Beaufort Historical Association
Volume 66, Issue I

HISTORIC TIMES Quarterly



HAPPENINGS
- MARDI GRAS BALL
- VALENTINE PARTY

COMMUNITY
CULTIVATING HISTORY

HERITAGE
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT



The Beaufort Historical Association is excited to be putting on the town's annual Mardi Gras Masquerade Ball for the first time. This year's ball draws inspiration from the 18th-century featuring a red, white, and blue theme in honor of America's 250th birthday. It's the spirit of 1776, Carnival of Venice, and New Orleans Mardi Gras rolled into one over-the top signature event! Guests are encouraged to break away from the traditional purple, green, and gold and instead celebrate with imaginative costumes and colors that reflect 1700s era patriotic characters or emblematic figures, such as Lady Liberty or an American eagle. The costume ball kicks off Beaufort's popular Mardi Gras weekend of revelry on Friday evening, February 20, from 7:00PM-10:00PM. Tickets are $150 and available online at beauforthistoricsite.org, or by calling (252) 728-5225, or in the Welcome Center.

Masquerades and Mardi Gras Have an Intriguing Place in American History



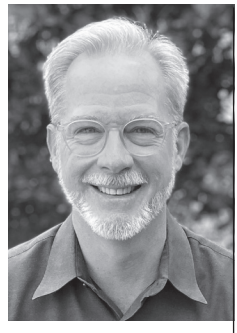
View of all the principal MASQUERADE FIGURES *at the Rotunda May 12th, 1789*

The origins of masquerades are found in 15th-century Venetian Carnivals, May Day traditions, and Italian commedia dell'arte. By the 18th-century, they found their way to England, France, Germany, and other European populations. As explorers and immigrants arrived in America, French influences became most prominent in Louisiana where masquerades quickly blended with the multicultural religious observations and traditions of Mardi Gras. British and German nobility were also fond of masquerades, so it stands to reason those living in the colonial era would have likely encountered costume balls on occasion even though documentation is scarce as to frequency and location.

One appeal of early masquerades was social freedom. The anonymity of masks offered a sense of abandonment that allowed guests to mingle among different social classes and engage in behavior considered unacceptable to social norms. Fortunately, mingled merriment has far less reason to be covert today but the opportunity to let loose in a costumed setting remains highly compelling. So, disguise yourselves boldly, add outrageous garniture, "rig out" as these two pictured below have…and join the fun of a Mardi Gras Masquerade Ball like no other!



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



To "cultivate" primarily means tending to or preparing soil for planting with hopes of yielding healthy growth, fruits, and flowers, but it also refers to nurturing, improving, refining, and adapting various aspects of life, such as skills, relationships, and ideas. As the Beaufort Historical Association enters 2026, the concept of cultivation is an ideal guiding value for strategic planning. In the last quarter, the Board and I identified short-term and long-term goals for the site. Among immediate goals is revitalizing our central lawn, which has suffered due to vigorous use and heavy machinery required to remove the dying pecan tree. This spring, we will level the lawn, amend the soil, and reseed it to promote more resilient grass. Attention will also be given to the Manson House Garden, where trees and shrubs will be pruned, and our partnership with the Master Gardener volunteers will result in an updated irrigation system to help sustain the beautiful pollinator garden.

Additionally, a small shed is being built on site replicating the look of an historic structure for the purpose of storing tools and supplies supporting Living History and educational programming. This new, accessible storage will enable increased hands-on heritage experiences year-round. Long-term goals are also taking root and input about our future will be welcomed by members through surveys, committee activity, and member meetings in 2026. As we adapt to the changes and growth of Beaufort, I encourage you to keep your membership current, visit our website 'EVENTS' tab frequently (beauforthistoricsite.org), and participate in association functions including special America 250 happenings! Our funding comes directly from signature party events, silent auctions, concerts, workshops, summer and winter homes tour events, site tours, donations, sponsorships, and sales from our art gallery and gift shop. Together we cultivate community while sustaining a downtown destination that preserves Beaufort's heritage and culture.

CULTIVATE

Thank you for your kind support and Happy New Year!

Michael

Michael Tahaney
michael@beauforthistoricsite.org

Valentine Party: February 8

The annual Valentine Party and membership drive plays a crucial role in providing essential funding to care for and maintain our valued grounds, gardens, and buildings during the off season.



Many members note it as a favorite BHA tradition. This is an open house event FREE to the community that welcomes new members and volunteers. Every historic building on the grounds will be open for hands-on exploration. Best of all, it's for everyone – adults and kids alike! This party also serves as the Featured Artist reception for Annie Kinney Villa.

Refreshments will be thoughtfully prepared by local businesses and generous volunteers.

Helping hands and food sponsors are always needed, so if you are interested in volunteering or sponsoring, please call 252-728-5225.

Remember to RSVP so we know how many to expect! Invite anyone curious to learn more about the Historical Association. Membership options begin at just $25 for students and seniors, extending to the $5,000 Somerset Circle level. Each tier offers its own benefits. New memberships may be purchased at the Valentine Party or online at beauforthistoricsite.org.

For RSVPs and more information visit our website, stop by the Welcome Center at 130 Turner Street, or call us at 252-728-5225.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING & VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Members and prospective members are invited to join the Beaufort Historical Association for the Annual Membership Meeting and Potluck Dinner, Tuesday, January 20, at 6:00PM at St. Paul's Church, 215 Ann Street.

This year's meeting will inform members as to ideas in the works for the coming year and will feature special guest speaker Beaufort Town Manager, Matt Zapp. He will share his position on renewed cooperation by the Town of Beaufort as well as several initiatives and events intended to raise the condition and profile of our Old Burial Grounds. Matt has extensive experience in the field and is a headstone restoration specialist. We look forward to his talk.

2025 Outstanding Volunteer Awards will also be presented at the meeting. Don't forget to bring a potluck offering to share for dinner. If each of us brings a small something, store bought or homemade, it will be a formidable tasty feast.

The Beaufort Historical Association honors individuals each year whose dedication and contributions have been vital to its success. We invite you to help recognize and select those who are truly deserving.

Nominations will be accepted through Jan. 12 at 5:00PM for the following categories:

- **Longevity Award**
- **Stewardship Award**
- **Volunteer of the Year**
- **Newcomer Award**

Nominations can be made by visiting the BHA at 130 Turner Street, or by calling 252-728-5225, or emailing officemanager@beauforthistoricsite.org, or online at beauforthistoricsite.org/event/annual-membership-meeting-3 and clicking *"Cast your vote for the 2025 Volunteer Awards Here"*, or simply scan the QR Code at right.

America 250

The BHA is proud to host one of America 250 NC's Traveling Exhibits in the Safrit Welcome Center at 130 Turner Street, Jan. 1-24. The display explores how North Carolina helped forge a new nation during one of the most transformative periods in history. Through maps, historical documents, and everyday objects, this exhibit reveals the state's role in the struggle for independence from early protests against British rule and the battles fought on Carolina soil to the drafting of the Constitution. ***Forging a Nation*** invites visitors to witness how ordinary people, conflict, and conviction shaped North Carolina's history during the American Revolution. It is an excellent exhibition. Please take a few moments to stop by while it's here for a limited time.

AMERICA 250 NC
CARTERET COUNTY

Off-season hours are Monday-Saturday 10:00AM-4:00PM.

Pictured right is a sample panel from the exhibit. →

THE WAR IN NORTH CAROLINA

Between 30,000 and 36,000 men from North Carolina served in the rebellion throughout the war, with soldiers ranging in age from roughly 14 to 40. Free people of color joined the Continental Army and were subject to the draft like any other soldier. Historical records confirm that over 400 Black men from North Carolina served, though many other Patriots of color likely went unrecorded.



Watercolor depicting African American and White soldiers in uniform from the Rhode Island Regiment. *Soldiers in Uniform*, De Verger, 1781, Brown University Library, Retrieved from the Library of Congress.

Newspapers sometimes provide glimpses into specific stories, such as that of Charles Peters, a Patriot soldier of Asian descent. An ad in the North Carolina Gazette on May 15, 1778, tells part of his story. Peters served with the Continental Army but deserted sometime before the spring of 1778. The language in the ad also suggests that he was formerly enslaved. Though much of his story remains unclear, his service highlights the complex experiences of those fighting for liberty.

The North-Carolina Gazette, May 15, 1778, North Carolina Newspapers, Digital NC.



HALIFAX, March 14.

TEN DOLLARS REWARD.

JUST PUBLISHED,



Although not Charles Peters, this unidentified Chinese man represents one of the many Asians who came to Europe and America during the eighteenth century. He is shown here dressed in English-style clothing. Portrait by George Dance, circa 1793, The Trustees of the British Museum.

THE BATTLE OF MOORES CREEK BRIDGE

Multiple factors influenced whether individuals identified as Loyalists or Patriots, including where they lived, kinship groups, status of enslavement, and economic factors. In North Carolina, these divisions led to violent civil war-like skirmishes. One such battle occurred on February 27, 1776, in present-day Pender County, where 1,500 Loyalist forces clashed with nearly 1,000 Patriots. The battle occurred at a strategic bridge over Moores Creek, where the Patriots set up a strong defense. The Loyalists, mostly Scottish Highlanders, led by Lt. Col. Donald McLeod, attacked early in the morning, but the Patriots, lying in wait, met them with heavy fire. Patriot forces, commanded by Richard Caswell, had removed the planks from the bridge and set up a defensive position, quickly defeating the Loyalist troops and inflicting heavy casualties. As the first major battle in North Carolina, Moores Creek formally ended royal authority in the colony and helped shift the momentum toward independence.

Two months later, on April 12, the North Carolina Fourth Provincial Congress set forth resolutions supporting colonial independence. The Halifax Resolves authorized North Carolina's delegates to the Continental Congress to vote for independence. Despite initial hopes to resolve the conflicts diplomatically, the Continental Congress ultimately declared independence on July 4, 1776.



ImpressionsArtGallery.com



Janet Jaworski - painter
David Jaworski - photographer

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Crime and Punishment

Crime and Punishment will be a commemorative America 250 theme on the Beaufort Historic Site for 2026 as we invite locals and visitors to explore factors that shaped America's path to independence. With the historic Courthouse and Old Jail as prized structures on our site, the topic seemed a fitting one that we hope will prompt contemplation and conversation. After all, crime and punishment can be relative. For example, in contrast to the laid-back charm of Beaufort today, in the 1700s Beaufort was a raucous colonial port town faced with many challenges related to basic law and order. Common crimes included theft, assault, and public disorder. The port setting further contributed to a unique mix of maritime-related offenses, such as piracy and smuggling. The colony's population included a diverse mix of settlers, traders, and enslaved individuals that at times led to tensions and conflict. With an absence of a formal police force, community members often assumed the role of policing. Vigilante justice was widespread especially when citizens felt the legal system, strongly influenced by English Common Law, was biased and inadequate. When punishments were carried out, public shaming, fines, whipping and public humiliation were prevalent methods with serious offenses often leading to execution.



Though somewhat isolated by its geographical location, Beaufort was nonetheless a microcosm of the broad societal challenges of colonial America. Crime and punishment were deeply intertwined with the economic and social fabric of the town, revealing the complexities of justice in a developing community. Understanding this historical context provides insight into how law and order was formed, perceived and carried out in early American society. We hope you will visit the site to experience one of our Crime and Punishment Series events or exhibits beginning March 16th and join us in examining what "justice for all" meant in 1700s America and what it means to 2026 America today.



Cultivating History

article by **MICHAEL TAHANEY**





> *"The gardens at the Beaufort Historic Site are more than just a feast for the eyes; they serve as a living classroom."*



The Impact of the NC State Extension Master Gardener Volunteers, Carteret County and the Beaufort Garden Club Volunteers at the Beaufort Historic Site have been flourishing with vibrant gardens as well as fresh cut floral and greenery décor for decades. While strolling the grounds, several designated gardens are easy to spot, especially when in full bloom. But the site also contains hidden gardens, pollinator stations, and behind-the-scenes activities of which many visitors and members might be unaware. Many may also not know the two organizations are fully separate. Though both have differing purposes, they thoughtfully coordinate with our staff grounds manager, Mike Butler, and a handful of generous lawn care services to maintain the 2-acre landscape.

The gardens at the Beaufort Historic Site are more than just a feast for the eyes; they serve as a living classroom. As for the Master Gardener volunteers, they contribute hard-earned expertise that benefits the grounds in many ways. To be certified as a Master Gardener







members must complete a 56-hour training course, pass a written exam, complete an additional 40-hour volunteer internship, then continue volunteer hours each year. Educational experiences with gardening as both teachers and learners are the mission of this organization. On the Historic Site, the Leffers Cottage Garden, Apothecary Garden, and propagation zones tucked behind other structures receive their primary attention. With a wealth of knowledge about native plants, sustainable gardening practices, and horticultural history they foster the region's cultural significance and biodiversity. In addition to their popular annual Plant Sale in April, we plan to boost the Master Gardener profile on the site by offering more workshops in the art of gardening with topics such as soil health, pest management, garden vegetables and herbs, and sustainable practices. Involvement is intended for learners of all ages. Colette Teachey noted while speaking on behalf of the organization for this article, "…children are especially delighted by gardens and the small creatures who inhabit them." By sharing their time and knowledge, these gardeners not only embellish our site but also empower individuals to cultivate their own green spaces responsibly. Visit the Beaufort Historic Site website often for updates on gardening workshops and activities. Learn more about the NC State Extension Master Gardener Program in Carteret County at: https://carteret.ces.ncsu.edu/categories/lawn-garden/extension-master-gardener-volunteers/

Equally important is the Beaufort Garden Club, which contributes to the Historic Site in a variety of ways and has done so for decades. The Beaufort Garden Club was established in 1959 as a dedicated volunteer group focused on beautifying our historical town through plantings, maintaining public gardens, promoting conservation, and celebrating local maritime heritage with projects like the "Menhaden Melody" sculpture on the waterfront. Its members continue to enhance Beaufort's charm and the Historic Site immeasurably.

Anyone experiencing the Old Homes Tours in mid-summer or the Christmas Candlelight Tours in December has enjoyed the spectacular floral arrangements and live holiday greenery wreaths that adorn the site and private homes during each of these events. The preparations rival those of a royal wedding. Timing is especially critical so that blooms or boughs are perfectly fresh for the events. This is especially true with the summertime arrangements more fragile than winter greenery. A multitude of volunteers must be entirely coordinated with schedules, teams, and fresh cut botanicals.



Though pressures of the tasks may be in the air on assembly days, the fragrances in the air are heavenly. Also in the air there is an impressive sense of fun and community pride with members gathered to do a beautiful thing together. The Beaufort Historical Association is grateful to be among select local recipients who benefit from this organization's generosity and talents.



Their further contributions on site include the improvements and upkeep of the Memorial Garden that borders the brick pathway between the Welcome Center and the Mattie King Davis Art Gallery. This large garden bed has expanded and matured over many years. The garden now substantially softens views along the site's commercial lot line and adds vivid color throughout the seasons. Countless hands have weeded and planted in this bit of earth and the tradition continues. In spring and summer, the garden requires constant watering and attention carried out by an active beautification committee of the organization fondly called "The Pretty Ladies" - though it's important to note the Beaufort Garden Club includes men and women as members. Their presence on site is always welcome and generally comes with a flurry of clippers, nippers, rakes and trowels. To learn more visit: https://beaufort-gardenclub.com/

The Beaufort Historical Association is pleased that the missions of both organizations cooperate so well in effort to ensure the legacy of the past is remembered through the cultivation of knowledge and nature, making a lasting impact on both the site and our community. We thank them for their commitment to making a positive difference.

Jumble Sale Recap

Thank you to all the vendors and guests who came out for the Beaufort Historic Site Jumble Sale. The event was truly made special by the wonderful vendors, small businesses, and artists who filled the grounds and helped create such a lively atmosphere. A special thank you to the Beaufort Garden Club for their delicious bake sale and continued support, which helped make the day even sweeter.





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MATTIE KING DAVIS *Art Gallery*

FEATURED ARTISTS ANNIE KINNEY VILLA AND BF REED



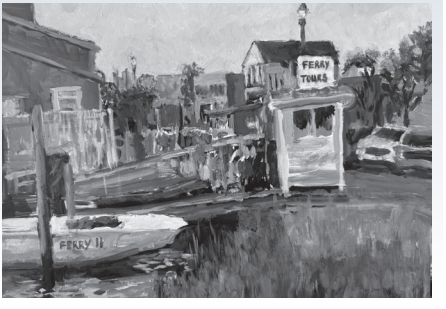
ANNIE KINNEY VILLA
February 8-March 25

Opening Reception Feb. 8 | 2:00PM–4:00PM

As a contemporary artist with an impressionistic style, Annie's intent is to create art that is fresh and vibrant. Annie's strong connection to the environments that she paints influences her work. In simplifying the composition and not being overly explicit, her intent is to capture the effects of light, movement, mood and space in the landscape using value relationships and color. Annie's continual growth comes from her natural curiosity and interaction with the landscape.









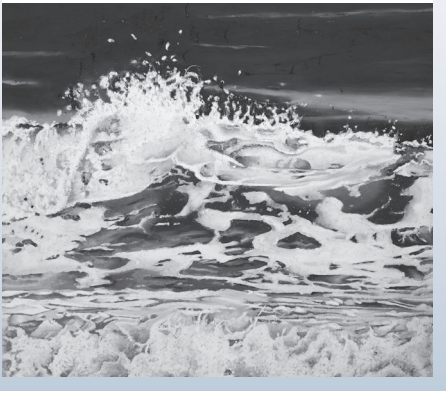
BF REED
March 27-May 27

Opening Reception March 27 | 4:00PM–6:00PM

BF Reed is a North Carolina–based, multi-award-winning artist who expresses her creativity through hyper-realistic pastel still life works. Drawing on a background in medical illustration and decades of teaching and studio practice, Reed's paintings explore close observation, reflection, and subtle shifts of light on porcelain, glass, and reflective surfaces. She is local and a Signature Member of the Pastel Society of America and a Master Circle member of the International Association of Pastel Societies.







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Mr. and Mrs. Mark Medlin

BENEFACTOR
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Ms. Mary Ann Fitzgerald
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hollinshed
Mr. and Mrs. George Littlewood
Mr. Eric Lindstrom and
Mr. Kennon Jackson
Mr. and Mrs. John McBrayer
Mr. and Mrs. Smedes York

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The Beaufort Historical Association strives to research, preserve, and interpret the architecture, history, and culture of Beaufort & Carteret County, and to educate current and future generations of this coastal heritage. The generosity of its members, donors, and volunteers plays a significant role in Beaufort's future by helping to preserve its past! Join today at beauforthistoricsite.org/membership/

WOOTEN FAMILY

At the time of this publication the tragic fire that caused devastating damage to the Duncan House at 105 Front Street is no longer breaking news. However, we could not release this edition without acknowledgement of this significant moment in Beaufort's history. The stately structure, known for its rich heritage and architectural significance, had been a formidable landmark in the community for over two centuries. The home has also been a host site for many Beaufort Historical Association activities since the 1960s. Our hearts go out to the Wootens who, fortunately, were not in town at the time of the blaze. We have received word that they intend to rebuild. The restoration/replication will not only stand again as a lovely home for Mr. and Mrs. Wooten but it will be a gift to the community that brings back an iconic structure to our town's identity.



MEMORIAL GIFTS & DONATIONS

MEMORIAL GIFTS

In Memorial of Schooner Nowell
From Jeffrey H. Burton
From Bess and Win Walker
From Keila M. Keadle
From Patricia Suggs

To quote a close friend of Schooner, "One of the brightest stars in the universe has been extinguished." Schooner was one of those joyous donors who always came by the office to hand deliver his donations whether for membership, all the parties, or a special gift for the restoration of the Jail several years ago. He enjoyed giving as much as he enjoyed watching us celebrate his gifts in person!



In Memorial of Marion Walker
From Kathryn Parker

In Memorial of Ed Robbins
From Susan Robbins

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

Blair and Steve Smallman in honor of Pat and Vick Moore
Debbie and George Aiken in honor of Patricia Suggs
Eric Lindstrom and Kennon Jackson to the BHA
Vic and Mary Grady Bell to the BHA

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December Event Highlights

Town of Beaufort Christmas Parade



Thanks to the diligent effort of Patricia Suggs and her hard-to-find parts sources in England, local mechanic Blake Joyner, and members of the bus committee, our double-decker bus was able to safely make an appearance in the local Christmas Parade. An intrepid group of volunteers decorated and launched an excess of candy from the bus. Oh, what fun! With planned mechanical attention this spring we hope to have a full season of trouble-free bus tours and special charters in 2026!

Holiday Evergreens and Décor

We were happy to have received over a dozen handcrafted wreaths from the Beaufort Garden Club that were displayed on the gates and doors of the site. The club donates the wreaths each year as part of their service mission to the community. THANK YOU! And thank you to Marshall, Elizabeth, Wes, Heidi, Heidi, Karl, Denise, Nikki, Rob, Debbie, Lee and Bill for crafting our first ever Fishtowne net "tree," pictured on page 15. Also pictured is docent Susan Case wearing one of several berry red colonial era dresses specially handmade by our extraordinary volunteer, Sherry Young.









Employee Appreciation Dinner Party

The Board of Governors hosted a holiday dinner party for the BHA staff as a thank you for the dedicated work that keeps the Historic Site and our non-profit organization running smoothly. The generosity of this amazing board is remarkable, and a sincere thank you goes to Beaufort Restaurant Holdings for their kind efforts to make this a special night for all.

HELP WANTED

VOLUNTEER BUS DRIVERS
DOUBLE-DECKER BUS

Following electrical work during the off season, we anticipate a busy calendar for bus tours and local charters in '26. Driving the vintage Routemaster requires a balance of physical and mental tenacity as well as a flexible schedule. A bus driver class will be offered in late February or early spring to earn an NC state Commercial Driver License – free of charge. **If interested, contact our executive director at (252) 728-5225 by February 20.** The class will be scheduled around availability of those who enroll.

WE NEED YOU!

Christmas Candlelight Tour











The sold out Beaufort Historical Association Christmas Candlelight Tour was a peak holiday happening in Beaufort to be sure. On a cool, clear evening guests strolled candlelit paths to beautifully decorated private homes, historic buildings, and festive stops across town, each adorned with beautiful holiday décor. Volunteers, homeowners, and local partners helped share an evening filled with tradition and hospitality, offering guests an exceptional glimpse inside some of Beaufort's most treasured spaces. The event not only captured the magic of the season but also supported the BHA's ongoing mission to preserve and share Beaufort's history and architecture.

An enormous thank you to event chair, Elizabeth Gould, house coordinators, docents and the many volunteers who helped make this event possible. A special note of gratitude goes to the homeowners, churches, and local businesses who opened their doors and hearts. Our community collaborations are the reason this tour remains meaningful and memorable for locals and visitors year after year.

Celebrating History
Engaging *Community*

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BHA UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY 1-24 | 10:00AM-4:00PM
Forging A Nation - America 250 Traveling Exhibit
Welcome Center

JANUARY 20 | 6:00PM
Annual Meeting & Pot Luck Dinner
St. Paul's Church, 215 Ann Street

FEBRUARY 8 | 2:00PM-4:00PM
Valentine Party & Featured Artist Opening
with Annie Kinney Villa
Beaufort Historic Site and Gallery

FEBRUARY 20 | 7:00PM-10:00PM
Mardi Gras Masquerade Ball
Beaufort Historic Site

MARCH 27 | 4:00PM-6:00PM
Mattie King Davis Featured Artist Opening
with BF Reed
Mattie King Davis Art Gallery & Downtown

CELEBRATE

AMERICA 250

2026 marks America's 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In observance of this milestone, the Beaufort Historic Site will host feature exhibits, guest speakers, and exciting 1776-themed events where you'll have fun with history! Don't miss a thing by following our social media posts and visiting our homepage weekly (www.beauforthistoricsite.org) for updates. Much is happening on site and your involvement with the Beaufort Historical Association is vital to our mission.

May your new year be rich with reasons for celebration.