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Newbold - White house now ready for public viewing

After a decade of thought and two years of construction, the Newbold-White House opened Friday morning.

The simple seventeenth-century structure, believed to be the oldest house in North Carolina, was opened to the public after a short ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by some 175 people.

The guest speaker for the occasion was Lawrence J. Wheeler, deputy secretary of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. Wheeler filled in for Sara Hodgkins, Secretary of the Department of Cultural Resources, who was hospitalized.

In his speech, Wheeler said that the house "captures our culture, tastes and beliefs. It gives us permanence and stability."

"The house provides a link with the past in North Carolina, of which we have so few reminders today."

Wheeler, mindful of the budget cutting at all levels of government, took a position in his speech encouraging governments not to forget local heritage.

"We must keep state support for historical preservation at a healthy level," he said.

The ceremony opened with the color guard of the Hertford Fife and Drums

and a welcome from Albert D. Eure, President of the Perquimans County Restoration Association, followed by an invocation by Rev. Ken Spivey, pastor of the Piney Woods Friends Meeting. Eure then introduced the master of ceremonies, Hertford banker R.L. Stevenson, finance chairman of the restoration association.

Raymond C. Winslow, Jr., the Perquimans County historian who conducted much of the research that went into the house, then gave a short history of the house, which at one time house the North Carolina colonial legislature along with several prominent figures in the Albemarle's past.

Among the acknowledgements were legislatures who couldn't attend because of the extended legislative schedules: Senators Melvin Daniels and J.J. "Monk" Harrington, and Representatives Vernon James and Charles Evans.

The restoration society also received acknowledgements from Governor James Hunt, U.S. Senators Jesse Helms and John East, Rep. Walter Jones, and Mrs. Hodgkins.

Then Wheeler, Eure and Mrs. J. Henry Newbold jointly cut the ribbon. The

closing prayer was led by Rev. Edwin T. Williams, first president of the county restoration association.

The house, as yet unfurnished, was then opened for a public tour, with Winslow as guide. The one-and-a-half story house, meticulously renovated by contractor Wilbert Kemp, was considered something of a mansion in its time. It has two downstairs rooms with large fireplaces and several closets — supposedly a sign of wealth. Wooden spiral stairs lead to two upstairs bedrooms.

A buffet luncheon was held at Angler's Cove after the ribbon-cutting.

Restoration of the house cost about \$56,000, according to Stevenson, most of the money coming from state and federal grants. A community fund-raising project brought in some \$21,000. More money is still needed for the furnishings and maintenance of the house.

Free tours of the house were conducted over the weekend. Regular touring hours for the house began Tuesday, and will be Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Sundays.



Finally!

After years of working and waiting, the Newbold-White House opened to the public last Friday. At left, Albert Eure, Mrs. J. Henry Newbold and speaker Lawrence Wheeler cut the ribbon.



Hot, dry summer weather is taking its toll on the county's crops

The June heat wave, combined with a lack of good rainfall, has taken its toll on the crops in Perquimans County.

As nearly everyone in the county knows, the corn is rolling, and Perquimans County Agricultural Extension Agent Bill Jester confirms what the eye makes evident — the crops are hurting.

"We need rain bad," he said. The area has not had a good rain in the last three or four weeks, and with that and the

record-breaking heat spell, the crops are petering out.

The damage is already serious in some parts of the county. Jester said that he believed the corn in the Joppa and Whiteston area "is pretty much shot. It probably won't make it."

The heat wave caught farmers at a bad time. The corn began pollinating just as the heat and dry weather came in, and those are poor conditions for pollination.

"The hot dry weather we've been having," Jester said, "especially when

its in the high 90's like we've had, is killing the pollen."

The cool weather of the last ten days or so has brought some relief, particularly for pollinating plants, Jester said, but rain is still a must. Jester said that ideally corn should have about an inch of rain a week.

"A good rain would severely change the complexion of the problem," he said. With some moisture, Jester felt that this could turn out to be a good year.

It's not just the corn that has suffered through the weather. Soybeans are becoming infested with nematodes, particularly in fields where soybeans have been planted in consecutive seasons. Jester said the nematodes multiply more rapidly in the hotter, dryer weather.

Peanut farmers are complaining of thrips infesting their plants, and it appears that insecticides are not keeping them under control. Jester said that this problem was heightened by dry planting

conditions in May and early June.

But Jester then added that applications of insecticide on the more mature plants seem to be helping. "Most of the peanuts are growing out of it," he said. "They're looking much better."

The heat not only affects crops, but livestock also had to sweat out the heat. Jester said that as for hogs, the heat "plays severe havoc with feeding efficiency," and "down the road it may affect their breeding success."

There is a good side to all of this, though. Jester reports that the 200-odd acres of cotton are in fine shape. "The cotton is doing extremely well," he said.

In addition, the sweet corn harvest is underway, and the price of sweet corn is high, Jester said. He thinks this year's sweet corn harvest will be "fairly favorable."

But so far, the bad seems to outweigh the good. "A little rain would solve a lot of problems," Jester said.

Local people are also taking a beating during the hot months

The weather has been fairly forgiving for the couple of weeks — that is to say, it's been cool — but don't kid yourself. June was just a prelude to what July and August will likely be — hot and sticky and miserable.

The Albemarle area suffered through record temperatures in June, and there is no reason to believe that summer will get any better. Besides, it doesn't take record temperatures to make July and August a torture.

But what can be just plain old misery to most people can be murder — literally — to others, particularly older people.

No one has died from heat-related causes in Perquimans County, and the county Rescue Squad had no reports of heat-stroke or heat-exhaustion so far this year, knock on wood.

Anice Peckham of the Rescue Squad said that "we've been extremely lucky. We've had very few cases (of heat exhaustion or stroke) in the last few years." But she then added that this year "chances are we may have a few."

Heat exhaustion, the less serious of the two illnesses, is caused by a loss of body water and salt from excessive perspiration. The symptoms are weakness,

heavy sweating, nausea and giddiness. The remedy is simply to replace those lost fluids, along with plenty of rest. Cold drinks and a cool place to lie down will usually fix it.

Heat stroke is serious business. It is caused by the body actually overheating, like an automobile. Too much time out in the sun can raise the body temperature to 105 degrees Fahrenheit or more.

The person feels faint and dizzy, has a headache, nausea, rapid pulse, flushed skin. If the victim doesn't receive treatment soon, he may lose consciousness and go into shock.

Heat stroke is an emergency, requiring immediate medical treatment. Once your body temperature reaches 105 degrees — just six or seven degrees above normal body temperature — brain damage, kidney failure and death may soon follow.

But those two illnesses are not the only threats from hot weather. Those with other illnesses find that their condition can worsen with the heat. The elderly, who are often weak to begin with, are more susceptible to other illnesses as the heat weakens them further.

Those with heart disease find it more difficult to get around. Asthmatics have a harder time breathing.

Patti Lorick at the Perquimans County Senior Center describes a scene that took place more than once during those hot June days.

"An old man was trudging along from the grocery store and just stopped and sat on the steps at the Center. He looked hot and tired, and I was afraid he wasn't going to make it."

"I asked him to come inside where it was cool, but he didn't want to. I guess he was afraid to admit he was tired. I told him that's what the Senior Center is for, but he wouldn't come in."

Miss Lorick, who conducts exercise sessions with the elderly at the county's rest homes, decided that during the heat spell she would cut down on the work outs, which are largely loosening-up exercises. "It's just too hot for them," she said.

Younger folk, of course, can also suffer from heat-related illness, and some ways are more apt to. Being more active, they sometimes don't know their limit. Older people seem to have that advantage — experience has taught them how far they can go. "The elderly seem to be able to pace themselves," said Jodi Branham, who works with the county Health Department.

But the disadvantages of age outweigh the advantages. "The heat plays havoc with the elderly," Mrs. Branham said.

"It'll upset the balance of their system, particularly if they have cardio-vascular disease."

"Older people tend to be a little cold-natured because their circulation is poor," she said, giving old folks one other advantage over the young, and she added that it's not unusual to see the elderly wearing sweaters in 80-degree heat. Nevertheless, they don't have the biological defenses the young have, and if they're sick, the effect is worse.

In a study by the national Center for Disease Control, heat stroke was found to victimize persons 65 or older at a rate 12 or 13 times the remainder of the population. Old people, study found, cannot adapt well to heat stress.

Eating the right foods is the best way to combat heat-related illness. Liquids, in particular, are necessary to replace lost body fluid. But that can be more difficult than it sounds. In the elderly, "their appetites are poor anyway," said Mrs. Branham, "but the heat makes it worse. The hot weather makes you lethargic. You have no desire to eat."

"You have to push those fluids down. It's not enough just to quench thirst, you have drink extra."

Laurel Tierney, nutrition director at the Albemarle Regional Planning Commission here in Hertford, suggests different ways to increase fluid intake.

"There are many foods which have a lot of liquid in them," she wrote in an article for THE AGING MESSENGER. "Salad greens, celery, tomatoes, cucumbers, some fruits, ice cream, popsicles and milk shakes are a few such foods."

"Besides eating foods with a lot of liquid, we need to drink plenty of fluids so we don't dehydrate. Drink about eight glasses of liquids daily, if you have average exercise. You will need less if you don't perspire a lot, and you will need more fluids as your exercise increases."

She goes on, "When it is hot outside, our bodies are hot on the outside and inside, too. Therefore, a cold beverage or food tends to make us feel cooler because it lowers our body temperature. During the hot summer months, try to drink cool beverages and drink few, if any, hot beverages. In this way you will lower your body temperature and feel cooler."

Mrs. Tierney also mentions other cool foods: salads with cottage cheese, eggs and meat; cold sandwiches, fresh fruit and vegetables, and yogurt.

The rest homes in the county are struggling, but all said they've managed to keep the folks comfortable. Only half of them have air conditioning, and in those hot June afternoons, most of the residents could be found sitting in front of a fan.

Mrs. Blanton manager of Hilltop Manor kept her folks in the house, which is air conditioned. "I wouldn't let them out," she said. "It's just too hot."

Mrs. Jones at New Hope Rest Home, which has no air condition, said her residents spend a few hours a day under the shade trees outside, and fans indoors help keep them cool at night. One of the convalescing residents had to leave because of the heat, but otherwise she thought they had all "held up."

Mrs. Jones was worried though. "I wonder what July is going to bring us," she said. "I'm afraid we might have some strong complaints in July."

Health officials recommend that during hot weather older people should stay out of direct sunlight, avoid strenuous activity, wear light clothing, drink plenty of liquids, take showers or baths to cool off, and be aware of danger signs such as dizziness, nausea and fatigue.



Cooling off

Parker Newborn demonstrates how to keep cool during those hot summer days. Newborn is taking a fishing break along the sound. (Photo by PAT MANSFIELD)