



DINNER ON BUCK CREEK FUNDRAISER

Our spring fundraiser event *Dinner on Buck Creek* was held at Historic Carson House on Saturday, May 21, 2011. Guests began arriving at 5:00 pm to participate in self - guided tours of the Carson House and Barn. Brochures for the tours highlighted the many renovations, improvements and exhibit additions that have recently been made. Carson House Board Members and Partners wanted guests to see and experience the projects their donations have made possible. A social hour continued with entertainment by the “*Skiffle Creek*” band.

Attendees took the opportunity during the social hour to participate in a Silent Auction. Auction items were displayed and available for bidding at *Bank of America* for several weeks before the benefit dinner. Auction items included: original paintings, pottery, handcrafted and decorative pieces, two mountain vacation getaways and more.

Silent Auction Donors included: Bunnie Burgin, Virginia Cross, Becky Cross, Bonnie and Marco Perez, Barbara and Dan Davis, Sandra Brown, Leslie Bradsher of Grove Hill Pottery, Lee Sisk, Mary Dodge, May VanDyke, Ann McNutt, James Haney, Rob Noyes, Zee and Arthur Campbell, Sue Ann and David Dubose, Sandi Rabb, Alice Stecker, Jamie Walters, Kathy Green, Laughridge Furniture, Little Sienna Restaurant, and Countryside BBQ.

Following a welcome by Sara Bryant, executive director of Historic Carson House, and a message and invocation by Jim Haney, Carson House Board chairman, guests enjoyed delicious surf and turf dinner with all the trimmings in the shade of the walnut grove. The beautiful McDowell County setting with good food, good fellowship and music made for a delightful evening.

Special Thanks to Rob Noyes and Countryside BBQ staff, Skiffle Creek, Mike Sobol, Painter’s Greenhouse, Bank of America, and all our hard working member volunteers.

We also thank all our sponsors, donors and attendees for making *Dinner on Buck Creek* a successful and fun event.

Plans have begun to hold another benefit *Dinner on Buck Creek* in May 2012.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE BEGINS FOR 2012 – Join The Carson House Society Today !

We are very grateful to our sustaining members of the Carson House Society, and welcome new members who wish to be a part of the ongoing preservation of this historic site.

Membership Cards are available for printing on our website at www.historiccarsonhouse.com under the Historic Carson Society tab or you may call Carson House at 828 724-4948.

Please send in your 2012 Membership Card and your tax deductible contribution to Historic Carson House.

RARE 150 YEAR-OLD CORN CRIB DONATED



In July, 2011 Carol Keys donated a mid-19th century corn crib to the Historic Carson House. The crib was originally located along the Walnut Street area of Pleasant Gardens. The owner decided to donate to our historic site where the corn crib may be seen by McDowell County residents, tourists and younger generations.

Arthur Campbell, Carson House Board member, and Steve Padgett, who has done construction and renovation at Historic Carson House, moved the corn crib in three sections to the Carson house grounds.

Corn cribs were small wooden structures used to dry and store corn. The typical corn crib would have slats to allow air to pass through and dry out the corn. In the U.S., they were often found on farms and plantations, both large and small.

The crib measures 16 ft. x 6 ft. and is made of hand hewn pine logs. The 150 year old corn crib has now been placed on the Carson House grounds near the renovated Carson barn. The corn crib has been restored and perhaps will later have a shed addition.

Historic Carson House is grateful to receive this significant donation from Carol Keys. Because of modern harvesting techniques, many similar farm structures have already vanished.

NEW EXHIBIT AT HISTORIC CARSON HOUSE:

In July, 2011, a new, permanent exhibit entitled *“Slavery and the Emergence of African-American culture in the Up-Country”* was opened at Historic Carson House. The exhibit consists of a collection photographs, documents, and artifacts; it is the only such exhibit in western North Carolina focusing on this formative period of African American history.

Dr. James Haney noted that the exhibit is appropriately located at the Historic Carson House. At the time of Col. John Carson’s death in 1841, sixty-eight enslaved people of African descent lived and worked on the Carson property. Dr. Haney pointed out that it was this community of black people who provided the craftsmanship and back-breaking labor for building the Carson House and its outbuildings, and by their work in the fields and gold mines provided the Carson sons with the wealth and leisure that enabled them to become civic leaders in the county, state, and nation.

Six mounted panels provide a narrative history of slavery in the up-county from initial enslavement on the west coast of Africa to emancipation. Photographs and documents treat local buying and selling of slaves, the variety of work slaves were engaged in, reflections on slavery by a slave and by a slave-owner and resistance to the institution of slavery by slaves.



A second section of the exhibit treats the artistry and craftsmanship of local African Americans as they adapted to local conditions and created cultural artifacts of great merit. Four finely wrought quilts point to the artistic talents of local women who succeeded in preserving elements of the African cultural tradition while at the same time becoming masters of the finest tradition of European American quilt-making. The exhibit shows that not only did slave men work in the fields, but examples of basketry, chair-making, wood carving, lock-smithing, and iron work



demonstrate that there were many skilled craftsmen among them.

A third section exhibits the domestic “machinery” used by slave women in providing textiles for their own homes and the homes of their masters. Flax, cotton, and wool were agricultural products from which clothing and bedding were produced. Artifacts on exhibit used in textile production include a flax breaker and hackle, large and small spinning wheels, thread winders, looms, and quilting frames, as well as examples of hand woven linen, cotton and wool fabrics.



A fourth exhibit area points to another category in the local African American population. In 1860 the total number of people of African descent in McDowell County had reached 1,558. Of this number, over two hundred and sixty-one (over 16%) were “free persons of color.” The exhibit features a simulation of the living quarters of such a person, a free woman, with three children, who were resident in the Carson House in 1850. A person of mixed race, Nancy Bailey, is believed to have been the daughter of a slave woman and a slave-owning white neighbor of the Carsons. Furnished with “cast-offs” from the Carson home, Ms. Bailey’s simulated quarters are designed to show that free people of African descent, working as house servants, were privileged in comparison to slaves living in log cabins.

NEW EXHIBIT.....continued

A fifth exhibit includes photographs of local people of African descent who were either born into slavery, or the children of former slaves, who after emancipation made significant contributions in the fields of education, religion, and health care. Especially noteworthy is a portrait of Simeon Lewis Carson, the son of former Carson slaves who made significant contributions in the medical field. The portrait on display is copied from the cover of *The Journal of the National Medical Association* that featured a lengthy article.

The exhibit was mounted by Dr. James Haney with the assistance of an advisory committee made up of two African American Carson descendants and others devoted to the promotion of black culture in the mountain region. The committee included Elsie Logan, Vernice Francis, Elmer and Janet Macpson of Marion, and Bill and Diane Mance of Asheville, and Kenny Hunter of Lincolnton.

LANDSCAPING PLANS

Due to disease and age, all the trees between the Carson House and Tom Johnson's have been cut down and removed. Lawrence Moore, a certified arborist, has made a list of desirable trees to consider. The landscape committee plans to have a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees that will grow tall in a short time. Also, some smaller, colorful trees will be added. Hopefully, the trees will be ready for planting in November.



HOLIDAY FUNDRAISING BAZAAR – SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2011 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM



Historic Carson House “Tis the Season” Holiday Benefit Bazaar

St. John's Episcopal Church Parish House ~ 315 South Main Street ~ Marion, NC



Carson House Partners have been working since summer on the beautiful items being offered at this bazaar. Come and shop for your holiday gifts and decorations.

Unique ornaments, holiday cookie cutters, beaded ornament hooks, wreaths, small pre-decorated trees, “Designer” gift bags and pre-wrapped gift boxes, great handmade gift items for “Secret Santa”, friends and children, and holiday jewelry. *Thorne Apple Valley Village Raffle*.
Holiday decorative items, bookmarks, Country Store with home baked goods and more!
“For the guys” gifts, book nook and bookmarks.

For all those seeking special holiday and one of a kind items for their homes and for gifts.

Information at Historic Carson House 828 724-4948



HIGHLIGHTS at HISTORIC CARSON HOUSE

- The McDowell News announced that Historic Carson House has been voted "*Best Historic Site*" in the *Best of McDowell County 2011* competition. This makes three years in a row that this award has been given to the Historic Carson House.
- Historic Carson House has had many visitors this year. In just six months, people from 30 states and 5 foreign countries have visited this historic property. Our foreign visitors have come from Brazil, Canada, England, Ireland, & Japan.
- Many improvements have been made to Historic Carson House this year (2011) to continue the effort of preservation and maintenance. Air conditioning and heating have been added to both 2nd and 3rd floors. Now the entire house is comfortable for our visitors. In addition, solar window treatments are in the process of being installed. These treatments will block up to 97% of the glare of the sun, 99% of UV rays, and 80 % of the sun's heat. Because of these improvements, the preservation of our valuable artifacts has been greatly enhanced.
- In April, the **PBS Channel 13, New York City** requested permission to include the imagery of our "**Crazy Patch Quilt**" for their video segments featuring the *Picturing America Project (National Endowment for the Humanities)*. This program will air on the New York PBS Channel 13 and will be offered to all PBS stations in all 50 states this fall. In addition, PBS has created a website to feature this project: <http://video.pbs.org/video/2053441460>

HIGHLIGHTS..... continued

- In June, the **McD TV – Channel 15, McDowell Government Channel** began airing its documentary featuring Historic Carson House in separate segments: History of the house, the new African-American Exhibit, and the barn.
http://mcdowellgov.com/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={22E7B98A-7D31-4174-9FEA-C5DA8F46B4EA}
- On June 7th, 4th grade students from Nebo Elementary were hosted at Historic Carson House for the “*Art of Farm Life*”. The students spent a day on the grounds and participated in hands on experiences featuring the following presenters: Susan Taylor (basket weaving), Susan Pyatt (corn chuck dolls), Leslie Bradsher (pottery), Bill Carson (storytelling), Mountain Glory Quilters Guild (the art of quilting), and Dr. Robert Boggs (care and maintenance of horses).
- On August 13, a **Carson Family Gathering** was held at Historic Carson House with many Carson descendants attending. This was a major planning session for a weekend 2012 Carson Family Reunion that will be held. Details will follow.
- On August 16, an **Administrative Retreat for the McDowell County School System** was held at Historic Carson House as the new academic year began for the school system. Administrative leaders of the system (principals, vice principals, coordinators, supervisors and other administrative staff) were given tours of the house and barn by Jim Haney, Board Chairman and Sara Bryant, Executive Director.
Because of the designation in 2010 of **Historic Carson House as an Extension Classroom for the McDowell County School System**, much collaboration and effort continue as opportunities are offered for students to have continued available access to the numerous primary sources that this historic property has to offer. As a result, many secondary students from McDowell High and the Junior High Schools are visiting this historic property on an individual basis, as well as in groups, to utilize the information learned to enhance their class assignments. Also elementary teachers continue their diligence to utilize the Historic Carson House to further enhance learning opportunities for their students.
- On October 10th, Historic Carson House will host the annual meeting and dinner for the **McDowell County Commissioners**. This very special annual event is held to honor the formation of McDowell County, which occurred at the Carson House in 1843.

THE GARDEN AT CARSON HOUSE



Historic Carson House Garden has been particularly beautiful this year and a source of peace and enjoyment for our visitors. Thanks to Sandra and Gene Brown, Jennifer East and garden volunteers for their efforts.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 1 - 2012 Membership Drive Begins

October 10 - County Commissioners Dinner at Historic Carson House

November 12 – Christmas Bazaar Fundraiser at St. John’s Episcopal Church Parish House ~ 9:00 am to 4:00pm

November 27- Carson House closes for the season

December 2 – Candlelight Carson House Society Membership Appreciation Evening – 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

December 3 – Candlelight Tours – Open to the public

