



A Tobacco Rivalry gets Political

By Anna Speth

After the Civil War, Durham produced tobacco tycoons W. T. Blackwell and Washington Duke. Their companies directly competed against one another throughout the 1880s and their rivalry went beyond business, bleeding into other aspects of Durham society. When Durham established a graded school for white students but not for black students, Washington Duke and Blackwell sat on opposing sides of the issue.

W.T. Blackwell assisted in the creation of an act for a graded school in Durham, including a tax levied on the townspeople for the maintenance of the school. The act dictated that taxes collected from the white tax base would go to white graded schools and taxes from the black tax base would go to black graded



Above: W.T. Blackwell (photo courtesy of Durham County Library)

schools. The town also intended to only create a white graded school. Duke and others found this policy discriminatory and opposed it.

In 1880 the General Assembly ratified the act, but it still needed to pass a

popular vote. Blackwell and others who backed it needed to secure support. Washington Duke distributed broadsides discouraging people from voting for the school. These assured people that they did not oppose the general idea public education, but fought the establishment of a graded school in Durham. They gave many reasons, for example that a number of good private schools already existed in Durham, that enough money sat in the public school fund to run a school without increased taxation, that the establishment of a white graded school would be unfair to the black population, and that if there was to be a graded school, it should be funded privately.

While most of the opponents

(Continued on page 4)

Inside this issue:

A Tobacco Rivalry gets Political	1, 4
Upcoming Events	2
From the Site Manager's Desk	3
Thank You Volunteers	3
Congratulations Dale!	4
Thank You Sponsors	5

This is the LAST paper newsletter!

Duke Homestead is going digital! This edition of *Gold Leaf* is the last paper copy we are sending out. You can now get our newsletter by subscribing via email. If you would like to continue to receive a digital copy of *Gold Leaf*, call (919) 477-5498 or email duke@ncdcr.gov.

Subscribers can receive a paper copy for \$5.00 a year. Please see the form on page six to submit for a paper copy.

About GOLD LEAF

The Duke Homestead Education and History Corporation publishes *GOLD LEAF*. The Corporation is a non-profit organization dedicated to the development of the Duke Homestead State Historic Site and Tobacco Museum. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. Visit the website, dukehomestead.org, for more information. This newsletter is published semiannually and is available free of charge for digital subscribers. A paper copy can be received for \$5.00 a year.

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Sir Speedy



Financial Report

Mary Bell
Treasurer

The funds of the Duke Homestead Education and History Corporation as of April 1, 2015 are as follows:

General Fund Savings	\$2,836.02
General Fund Checking	\$3,289.87
Scottrade Account:	\$43,162.09
Total Assets:	\$49,287.98

Upcoming Events

North Carolina State Fair

Oct 16th & 23rd

Join Duke Homestead in the Heritage Circle at the North Carolina State Fair this fall. We will be helping put on the Looping Contest on the 16th and the Mock Auction on the 23rd.

Christmas by Candlelight

Dec. 4th & 11th

Enjoy a candlelight tour through the historic area as we celebrate an 1870 Christmas. Enjoy cookies and hot apple cider.

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Adults: \$6.00

Kids 6 & under: \$3.00

Victorian Family Christmas

Dec. 13th

Spend an afternoon celebrating a traditional 1870 family Christmas, make crafts, and meet Santa.

1:00 pm - 4:00pm

Adults: \$2.00

Kids 6 & under: Free

Find more information on all of our events at **DukeHomestead.org**.

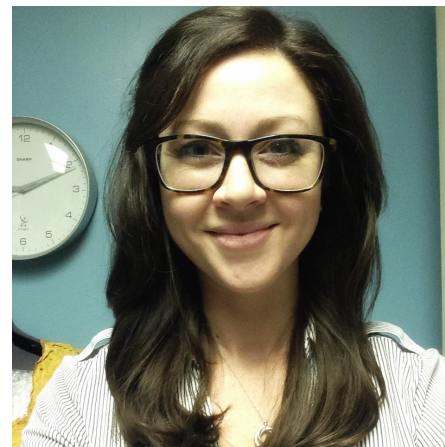
From the Site Manager's Desk by Jessica Shillingsford

Hello friends and fans of Duke Homestead! I am pleased to introduce myself as the new Site Manager as of June 1, 2015. In the last few months I have enjoyed getting to know the history of this place and the Duke family, as well as the team of people who keep the site going and tell these stories. From site staff to our DHE&HC board members, adult volunteers to Junior Interpreters, I gain more appreciation every day for the incredible support surrounding Duke Homestead. I'd like to give a particularly large thank-you to full-time staff members Mia Berg, Julia Rogers, and Andrew Long for their hard work (and patience!) during this transition.

My background is in Art History, Public History, customer service and strategic planning. Born in Virginia Beach, Virginia, I received an Art History undergraduate degree from American University in Washington, DC. I loved that experience, but wasn't quite ready to pursue

Art History as a profession. I *was* ready for a break from DC life, so I moved to Carrboro (then Cary, then Raleigh). After several years working in the retirement community industry, I wanted to return to the history world. I earned a Master's degree in Public History/American History from NC State University and worked with the City of Raleigh Museum in downtown Raleigh. Most recently, I worked with Oxford University Press in Cary managing the marketing and development of scholarly journals.

I've joined this team during an exciting time. We are ramping up for the long-awaited renovation of the Visitor Center, and planning new programs and events for 2016. There is no shortage of work to be done. Of course by "work," I mean many of the projects that you already know – new tables in the picnic area, new exhibits, or repairs to several historic structures, for example. But I also refer to the work of



growing our audience and bringing more people to the site. We must seek more sustainable fundraising avenues to support our efforts. We must find new and exciting ways to connect people with history so they become advocates for our site. These are our major challenges and opportunities in the coming years. Daunting? Yes! Doable? Absolutely.

I look forward to getting to know you over the coming months, and keeping you up to date on our progress. Feel free to stop by and say hello!

Thank You Volunteers!

As a small museum, Duke Homestead depends upon a dedicated group of volunteers to help give tours, complete site improvement projects, put on special events, and generally help us keep our site running. Already in 2015, volunteers have put in over 900 hours of service! We greatly appreciate all of our volunteers and cannot possibly say thank you enough for their hard work, dedication, and love of our site.

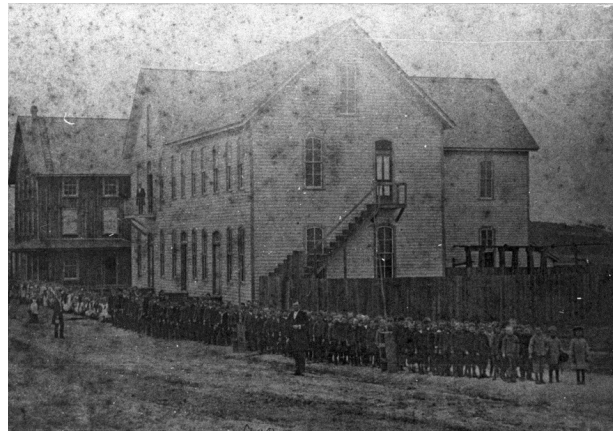
A Tobacco Rivalry gets Political *continued*

(Continued from page 1)

of the graded school stuck to broadsheets and speeches, a man named A.M. Rigsbee took decisive legal action and the case ended up in the State Supreme Court. Because the local officials had set the tax up to use the white tax base to fund white graded schools and the black tax base to fund black schools, but not implemented an act for the creation of a black graded school, the Supreme Court did not consider the tax uniform and the method of taxation was deemed illegal.

Advocates of the graded school eventually pressured the town into holding the vote. In 1882, a vote of 304 to 101 ratified the act and a white graded

school was founded. The previous ruling allowed A.M. Rigsbee to sue Durham over the issue of the lack of a black school. Rigsbee won the suit, and in the end voters passed an amended act providing a graded school for both races. The white graded school continued with private support, largely from Blackwell. He said of the opponents of the school, "I feel that their action is to be deplored and that it is a great



This building was converted from a tobacco factory into the graded school for white children in 1882 and served in that capacity until 1892. (Courtesy Duke RBMC - Wyatt Dixon Collection)

calamity to our community." The Dukes responded by saying that Blackwell "sheds his crocodile tears, but the advantage has been reaped by the well-to do."

Congratulations Dale!

Duke Homestead would like to congratulate Dale Coats on his recent retirement. Dale has served Duke Homestead and State Historic Sites since he began as an intern on site in 1977. After managing Duke Homestead for a number of years, Dale was promoted to Regional Manager and finally to the position of Assistant Director of State Historic Sites. Dale leaves a lasting legacy with Duke Homestead and Historic Sites, and we wish him all the best in his retirement.

To the right you can see a photo from 1987 of Dale teaching Boy Scouts how to use a cross cut saw at Duke Homestead.



A Soldier's Walk Home Sponsorship

Below you will find a list of the sponsors for our event, A Soldier's Walk Home, which took place during May of this year. The event would not have been a success without their generosity.

Special Thank You to the North Carolina Tobacco Grower's Association for lending the sit a GoPro camera to document Philip's walk home.

Weary Feet

1 - \$100 Level

American Legion Post 71
Bob Healy
Elizabeth United Methodist Church
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Marian O'Keefe
Morning Glory Inn
Princeton United Methodist Church
The Trane Company
Wayne Hays

Mile Marker

\$101 - \$500 Level

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Hampton Inn Kinston, NC
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The King's Daughter's Inn
UDC Bennett Place Chapter
UDC Johnston Pettigrew Chapter 95
Vin Rouge Bistro



Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, Philip made the 160 + mile journey from New Bern to Duke Homestead in two weeks.

Footsore and weary, he arrived at Duke Homestead on May 23rd.



GOLD LEAF

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