

AMERICA'S FOUR HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE RECORDS, 1982-1989

.5 cu. ft. (1 document box)

ABSTRACT

Between 1584 and 1587, Sir Walter Raleigh attempted to colonize the Outer Banks of North Carolina with the Roanoke Voyages. To commemorate the 400th anniversary of these voyages, in 1973 the North Carolina General Assembly created the America's Four Hundredth Anniversary Committee, and charged members with planning and carrying out celebrations and events from 1984-1987. Many North Carolina counties, including Mecklenburg County, had local committees, who also focused on their own histories for the events. David H. Henderson, an attorney in Charlotte, was made Chairman of the Mecklenburg County Committee for America's 400th Anniversary.

This collection includes correspondence, financial records, member lists, and project records of the committee.

ACCESS

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PREFERRED CITATION

Cite as: America's Four Hundredth Anniversary Committee Records, 1982-1989, Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

ACQUISITION

Presented by David H. Henderson.

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HISTORICAL NOTE

Prior to the permanent settlement of Jamestown in 1607, Sir Walter Raleigh received a charter from Queen Elizabeth I to establish a colony in the New World on the coast of

present day North Carolina in 1584. He sent two explorers, Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlowe in April of that year to the Outer Banks of North Carolina to learn about the area and its inhabitants. They returned two months later with encouraging reports, and brought two Native Americans back with them.

Raleigh was knighted in January of 1585, and given possession of the area his men had found. Raleigh sent his cousin, Sir Richard Grenville, to the area, which had been renamed Virginia, to establish an English colony. Following an exploration of the area, Grenville briefly established a base on Roanoke Island, and returned to England in 1586. In 1587, John White proceeded to lead settlers to establish a colony in Virginia, and eventually settled on Roanoke due to its isolation. While there, the Croatoan Indian Manteo was baptized, and shortly thereafter the first English child was born in the New World, Virginia Dare. White returned to England a few days later with the promising news, but upon his return three years later, nearly all trace of the colonists had disappeared.

To commemorate the 400th anniversary of these voyages, in 1973, the North Carolina General Assembly created the America's Four Hundredth Anniversary Committee, and charged members with planning and carrying out celebrations and events from 1984-1987. Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. began appointing committee members in 1978, including several figures such as Andy Griffith. The American Quadricentennial Corporation was created to raise private funds for the commemorative events. All North Carolina counties were encouraged to participate by creating their own American 400th Anniversary Committees, and many, including Mecklenburg County, did just that.

The official period for the commemoration lasted from April 27, 1984, which was the 400th Anniversary of the sailing of Amadas and Barlowe, until August 18, 1987, which was the 400th Anniversary of the birth of Virginia Dare. Chaired by Charlotte attorney David H. Henderson, the Mecklenburg County Committee for America's 400th Anniversary set forth to add a variety of local events to correspond with those put on by the State. Committee members included several prominent people in Charlotte, and community members and organizations were encouraged to come up with ideas for local events, although the State Committee had final say over the projects. Some of the local events included special Charlotte Symphony Orchestra concerts, an exhibit at the Mint Museum entitled "A Pastiche of Victorian Fashions—Dresses Using English Fabric 1840-1900," a historical tie-in the annual Festival in the Park, a lecture series with the Charlotte colleges, and activities for Charlotte-Mecklenburg schoolchildren. There were also a variety of brochures and publications produced, Harris Teeter shopping bags with the 400th Anniversary logos, and a video created.

REFERENCES

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Daniels, Dennis F. "America's Four Hundredth Anniversary Committee: Commemoration of the Roanoke Voyages," 2004. <http://www.history.ncdcr.gov/centennial/features/400th-anniv.htm>

RELATED MATERIALS

America's 400th Anniversary. (CALL NUMBER: NCR VERTICAL FILES)

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Evans, Phil, Nick Hodsdon, and Doug Barger. *America's 400th Anniversary Handbook.* Manteo, NC: Storie/McOwen, 1984. (CALL NUMBER: NCR 975.601)

North Carolina, Office of the State Auditor. *The American Quadricentennial Corporation, Raleigh, North Carolina [microform]: Report on Audit and Financial Statements.* Raleigh: Officer of the State Auditor, 1983. (CALL NUMBER: NCR STATE DOCUMENTS MICROFICHE I26 11:A512)

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

America's Four Hundredth Anniversary Committee Records include information relevant to planning and executing events for the three years of the commemoration. This collection's largest series are Correspondence, which includes correspondence primarily addressed to David Henderson or copies of letter from him, and Projects which consists of Calendared, Fundraising, and Proposed Projects. The Projects section encompasses information on a variety of projects that went ahead as scheduled, as well

as those rejected, and includes fundraising efforts for the projects. The majority of the contents date from 1984-1987.

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