Overview of Collection:

Creator: Surry County Revolution Bicentennial Commission

Title: Surry County Revolution Bicentennial Commission

Dates: 1974-1979

Quantity: 3 Cubic Feet

Abstract: The Surry County Revolution Bicentennial Commission was formed as a result of a request to Robert Merritt, president of the Surry County Historical Society in 1974. Nine original members met on March 5, 1974 to establish goals and set priorities for the commission. As the project grew more members were added, a budget was established, and Edward Spanski, Jr. was appointed full time coordinator. Mr. Spanski was a history instructor at Surry Community College. The collection in the Archives is a direct result of the activities and events planned by the commission. The collection includes: planning documents, contest entries, event documents, correspondence, newspaper clippings, publicity, etc.

Language: English

Repository: Surry Community College Archives

Scope and Contents of Collection:

This collection is derived from the activities of the Surry County Revolution Bicentennial Commission. There are exploratory and planning documents, correspondence, artwork and drawings from contests, documents describing various events held in the county, newspaper clippings, publications produced by the committee, and finally a list of the accomplishments and direct results of the work of the commission. The collection is contained in three boxes. The original artwork for the flag and county seal is placed in a large flat box in the archives.
History of the Surry County Bicentennial Collection: In 1969 President Richard M. Nixon created the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission to hold a single city exposition in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, or Boston.

The official Bicentennial events began on April 1, 1975 when the American freedom train began a 21 month tour of the 48 contiguous states. Celebrations and observances continued through the next year with events culminating on Sunday, July 4, 1976, the anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

On the state and county level the North Carolina State Bicentennial Commission urged the president of the Surry County Historical Society, Robert Merritt to form a Bicentennial Commission for Surry County in 1974. Original members of the commission were:

Dr. J. Dale Simmons
Verona West
Franklin Badgett
Glenn Robertson
William Sanders
Ruth Minick
Hugh Atkinson
R. Fletcher Good IV
Isabel Harrell

The first official meeting was held in Mount Airy, March 5, 1974. At this time the goals of the commission were established as follows:

1. Develop an appreciation of the county’s past
2. Unify the county
3. Bring attention to and encourage the preservation of archaeological and historical sites
4. Compare and contrast the life style of 200 years ago with that of today
5. Create a sense of pride and respect in local history
6. Encourage traditional arts and crafts
7. Establish a repository for historical collections and artifacts
8. Commemorate the 200th anniversary of the American Revolution and appreciate our independence
9. Discover the historical community of Surry County
10. Coordinate activities with surrounding counties and states
11. Have fun

As plans for the Bicentennial grew, a budget was established and more members were added. Expanded to 25 members the committee now included C. Frank Comer, Mike and Dianna Forrest, Kathleen Gilleland, L.H. Jones, Claude Eldridge, Mike Randleman, Joyce Ingram, William S. Hiatt, Jack Palmer, Vincent Lella, Vivian Lowe, Steve Taylor, Carroll Gardner, Charles Fletcher,
Bud Cameron, Doug Cook, Gene Everett, and Beulah Perkins. On August 15, 1974, a full time coordinator was appointed, Edward J. Spanski, Jr., a history instructor at Surry Community College.

The accomplishments of the committee were many:
1. The successful selection of an official county seal and flag as a result of a county-wide contest.
2. The establishment of a county archives in cooperation with Surry Community College and the Northwestern Regional Library to preserve documents, photographs, and artifacts of Surry County’s past.
3. The implementation of a local history program including course credit from Surry Community College with emphasis on informing local social sciences teachers in Surry County of local history.
4. The publication of two historical pamphlets; “Historic sites of Surry County and “How come Surry county and how come hit got along by herself who war borned and raised thar”.
5. The distribution of 5,000 booklets to the Surry County School system, and the Elkin School System.
6. The production of a slide presentation of Surry County’s past. This was given to the schools in filmstrip form.
7. The distribution of Bicentennial literature to the county.
8. Information distributed during the Autumn Leaves Festival.
9. Over 150 Bicentennial road signs placed by the Boy Scouts.
10. A visit by the U.S. Armed Forces Bicentennial Caravan on November 14, 1975.
11. The Rockford Preservation Committee received a $10,000 grant to restore Rockford, the first permanent county seat of Surry County.
12. Official opening ceremony for the Bicentennial Celebration held at Rockford.
13. Special posters created and distributed throughout the County.
17. Special exhibits shown at Pilot Mountain State Park.
19. Parades, fireworks, and special events held July 3-5, 1976 in Mt. Airy, Elkin, Dobson, and Pilot Mountain.
20. Historic tours program showcasing 30 significant sites in Surry County.
21. Commemorative coin minted with the new Surry County seal.

The Surry County American Revolution Bicentennial Commission was officially dissolved on January 18, 1979.

Note: This information was taken from the Surry County Bicentennial Commission Archives. For more detailed and thorough information please see the collection.
Arrangement of the Collection:

The collection is artificially arranged based on subject. The files that comprise the subjects are the series in the collection. The files are also arranged artificially.

Restrictions:

The collection is available to the public after an interview with library personnel.

Inventory:

Box 1:

Series I. Planning and Exploratory Documents
Series II. Correspondence

Series III. Contests/Events

Series IV. Accomplishments

Series V. Clippings/Publications