

**A Report on the Feasibility of
Developing a History Museum in the
Randolph County, North Carolina Courthouse**

**By: William J. Moore
Museum Consultant**

Date: August 27, 2004

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- I. PHYSICAL FACILITY
- II. INSTITUTIONAL AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT
- III. COLLECTIONS
- IV. EXHIBITS
- V. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH
- VI. CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

CONCLUSION

APPENDIX

INTRODUCTION

When the 1908-1909 Randolph County Courthouse building on Worth Street in Asheboro, North Carolina was vacated in 2002, the Randolph County Board of Commissioners decided to investigate the possibility of creating a history museum in the building to showcase the history of the county.

The purpose of this report is to examine the various possibilities for the creation of a successful history museum for the benefit of its visitors and to elevate awareness of Randolph County's history as an asset to tourism. Additionally, the educational experience of the museum's exhibits, collections, and programs could enrich the quality of life for all citizens of the county.

Each chapter of the report deals with the interrelated functions of a history museum. At the conclusion of each chapter, the consultant has submitted paragraphs of recommendations relative to each subject addressed. These recommendations are based upon observations, study, and personal experiences by the consultant and should be recognized as only some of the many ways in which the project can successfully develop through a series of initiatives.

I. PHYSICAL FACILITY

A. Brief History and Exterior Appearance

On November 4, 1907, the Randolph County Commissioners employed the firm of Wheeler, Runge and Dickery, Architects, in Charlotte, NC, to draw plans and specifications for the seventh Randolph County Courthouse. The style approved for construction was similar in design to the Iredell County, North Carolina, Courthouse and followed the complex patterns of Victorian revival combined with Beaux-Arts classicism. The site chosen for the courthouse was approximately midway between the previous courthouse and the rapidly growing Asheboro commercial development near the railroad. A group of local businessmen had purchased farm land from Dr. J. M. Worth and donated it to the county for use in building a new courthouse.

Work began in July of 1908 and after a series of cost cutting measures in November of that year, the building opened in July of 1909 at a cost of about \$34,000. As the county's needs grew, another building was added in 1950 to house the offices for the Clerk of Court, County School Board, the Tax Department, and the Register of Deeds.

Planning began in 1998 for the eighth Randolph County Courthouse and on July 21, 2002 a new and modern facility was dedicated. It stands just to the east of the old courthouse building. Earlier in 2002, the County Commissioners began to consider the current condition and the future of the old courthouse and its grounds.

The historic three story structure features a porch with four Corinthian columns supporting an elaborate pediment. A ribbed copper clad roof covers a Second Empire style domed cupola near the front entrance. A pressed tin facing within the porch pediment portrays rococo and mythological elements. A Confederate Soldier's Monument, erected in 1911 by the Randolph County United Daughters of the Confederacy, still stands on the south lawn near the front entrance.

The building is a pleasing combination of rough hewn granite, yellow face brick, sandstone, wood, concrete, common brick and a variety of metals, all forming one of the county's great architectural treasures. Its window shapes, arches, sills, lintels, roof lines, and pedimentary features are well designed and attractively arranged. Certainly, this structure stands as one of the state's most important public buildings.

In order to proceed in the best direction in planning for the future of the

courthouse building, the Randolph County Commissioners appointed a committee to study the structure and make recommendations on its use. On April 29, 2002, the Randolph County Historic Courthouse Committee held its first meeting. By the end of 2003, several decisions were recommended to the Commissioners.

Significant among these was the endorsement of a local history museum to be constructed in old Courtroom "A" in the upper level. Previously, exhibits on Randolph County history were presented in either various spaces in the 1908 building or in the Randolph County Public Library.

Collections and exhibits are now housed in the library's public areas and in the Randolph Room, a facility within the library for research on Randolph history and genealogy. The exhibits and collections are controlled and maintained by the library staff who are all employees of Randolph County.

The old courthouse had suffered slow deterioration for a number of years. The need for drainage of water away from the building was one of the primary problems. A deteriorated gutter/downspout system and poor drainage on the exterior grounds had contributed to sustained damage of interior spaces and exterior features.

As the new 2002 courthouse was being built, the firm of J. H. Allen and Company was granted a change order to its original new building contract to allow for repair and stabilization of the old courthouse. This wise decision not only saved the building from further deterioration but allowed the structure to continue its integrity in renewed adaptive use. A new metal roof was installed to match the patina of the old copper roof on the domed cupola. The company also rebuilt all of the gutters and downspouts throughout the building. The porch columns were repaired and the exterior of the building was painted. While the exterior did not undergo a true and totally accurate restoration of the original building, the colors were tastefully selected to accent the quality of the building's architectural detail.

The east elevation had been largely covered by the 1950 building addition. In an effort to accommodate the juncture of the new and old buildings, the facade was severely altered, especially in the attempted removal of extruding granite sills and brick architectural arches. The north and east elevations of the building have been somewhat modified to accommodate the needs of the building's occupants and patrons but the character of the original structure remains.

RECOMMENDATIONS: PHYSICAL FACILITY - EXTERIOR

- (1) As stated earlier, the stabilization and renovation of the exterior is not a true and

accurate “restoration” of the 1908-1909 appearance. A large portion of the original exterior facade exists, however, and a work of true restoration could be planned for the future. Such details as exterior doors, hand rails, and the exterior components of windows could be authentically replicated through research. The similarly designed Iredell County Courthouse, for instance, would still retain some of its original features and there may be existing photographs to verify the original designs of the Randolph County Courthouse. Removal of window air conditioning units and unsightly interior window treatments would also beautify the exterior appearance. In order to preserve details of the pediments, there appears to be a need for pigeon control.

Historic buildings are often noted for even the most minute details. The Randolph County Courthouse has such a pleasing variety of features that it could prove useful to request the services of a representative from the Preservation Section of the State Department of Cultural Resources in Raleigh. Even though a representative may have been consulted at earlier stages of the courthouse stabilization, a reevaluation would be very helpful. The services are free and without obligation.

- (2) The east elevation facing the new courthouse has received the most dramatic change to the building’s original appearance. In considering a new elevator for handicapped access to the two upper levels of the building, it is recommended that this elevator be erected on the outside of the building’s east side. The shaft could be appropriately and aesthetically attached to the section where the windows of the old courthouse had been made into doorways to the 1950 building. The doorway on the east hallway of the lower level would again be functional, but as an elevator passage rather than a doorway.

It is also recommended that the elevator be designed in a somewhat larger capacity to carry greater weights than normal because of the advantage of transporting artifacts and exhibit props to the appropriate levels of the building. Stairway access to the interior spaces of the building is often found to be difficult for carriers to navigate large or unusually shaped objects. If possible, the elevator should be designed to alleviate this problem. However, the aesthetic relationship between the exterior appearance of the elevator shaft and the interior function for the needs of the building would have to be carefully evaluated.

The remainder of the east facade would be restored as closely as possible to its original appearance, especially in the restoration of windows, window sills, and architectural features. The restoration of this facade will give a favorable and compelling impression to all those who view it from the new courthouse and from the large parking lot used by visitors and courthouse personnel.

- (3) Access to the building for people with disabilities would be available from the parking lot located at the rear of the courthouse. Parking is currently designated near the east elevation and with the addition of an elevator, no individual would be denied access to either the Worth Street level or the museum level. Modifications to the curbing and a concrete walkway leading to the elevator would allow full access to all who need assistance in entering and exiting the building. Security controls on the elevator panel would restrict access to the basement level.
- (4) Parking for patrons does not appear to be an issue for serious consideration at this time due to the availability of street spaces and adjoining or nearby parking lots. An evaluation of parking conditions should be conducted every five years to determine if a course of action is needed to alleviate any problems that may have developed. Bus parking should be considered for the parking lot at the north end of the building.
- (5) As briefly noted earlier, the restoration of the exterior components of windows should be a priority project. Many of the windows have been altered by either the removal of muntins or the re-configuration of original window patterns and styles. Restoration of the windows would add dramatically to the charm of the architectural presentation.

B. MAIN LEVEL (WORTH STREET ENTRANCE) - INTERIOR SPACE

The main entrance to the courthouse will remain on the Worth Street side of the building. An architecturally pleasing portico welcomes the visitor into a foyer of symmetrically original staircases at both the east and west ends. Vertically paneled wainscot line the walls. The staircases wonderfully retain their original balustrade and newel posts.

Directly ahead to the north is a large hallway which once had offices and storage areas on each side. The floor plan features a pattern of a perpendicular hall crossing the main hall at about mid-point, forming a cross hall pattern. A small elevator is at the north end of the center hall. Exterior doors are at the terminus of each passage.

Current plans designate that the Randolph County Economic Development Authority (E.D.C.) and the Randolph County Tourism Development Authority (T.D.A.) occupy most of the space on this level. There is some discussion of organizational shared space with museum functions, such as a conference room, workrooms or storage spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS: MAIN LEVEL - INTERIOR SPACE

- (1) The rooms are spacious, allowing efficiency without restrained conditions. The shared space concept between E.D.C., T.D.A. and the museum should work to collaborative satisfaction. It is important to develop and designate the floor plan for use by each agency early in the renovation process to avoid misunderstandings at a later date.
- (2) The stairways, wainscoting, and other significant architectural features in the entrance foyer and hallways should be either restored to their original colors or painted in colors appropriate to their style. These areas will be highly exposed to the public and representative of the quality of the structure. The original colors of painted surfaces can be determined through the services of a paint analyst. The Preservation Section of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources can provide recommendations on qualified analysts.
- (3) With the addition of a new service/passenger elevator on the east side of the building, the small passenger elevator at the north end is no longer needed. It is interesting to note that the elevator shaft appears to have once been a chimney, possibly used as a venting shaft for the original heating system. An examination of the shaft upon removal of the elevator might reveal some of the original features of the chimney. If the shaft remains after renovation, it could be renovated for secure storage area on each floor of service.

C. UPPER LEVEL (COURTROOM "A") - INTERIOR SPACE

The visitor may enter the upper or museum level by either the elevator or by ascending the stairway from the Worth Street level. A foyer of similar style to the one below is evident. Two pairs of wooden doors lead into what was once Courtroom "A".

The courtroom has been completely renovated and changed from its original appearance over the years to fit the needs of a modern court. A jury box, judge's bench, witness stand, spectator benches and other elements of court procedure have been left in place.

There are at least five enclosed spaces behind the courtroom which have been used for offices, jury deliberation, holding cell, judge's chamber and other uses. Additionally, five restroom areas are currently in place, all of which are in a state of disrepair.

What was once a balcony extends into the upper portion of the courtroom at the front entrance. This area, now enclosed for storage, is said to have been a spectator gallery for African American citizens during the time of segregated facilities. Modern paneling now encloses the

entire feature.

RECOMMENDATIONS: UPPER LEVEL - INTERIOR SPACE

- (1) This level should be able to accommodate exhibits and other primary museum functions. A complete renovation of this floor should be planned jointly by architects, museum personnel, and county administrators. Recommendations for specific use of the space will follow in the chapters on Exhibits and on Staff Development.
- (2) The entrance foyer on this level could be attractively restored and furnished with exhibits and informational material. More specific recommendations will follow in the chapter on Exhibits.
- (3) The spaces that once housed offices, judge's chamber, storage, holding cell, and jury deliberation room could easily be converted into museum use. The rooms at the north end could accommodate staff offices and storage. The stairs behind the elevator shaft would probably remain as required by building code.
- (4) The current toilet facilities should be evaluated for the number needed. Those not designated for public access or staff use could be renovated into storage or office space. Current restrooms located at the south east corner of the court room (X207 and X208) appear to have once been for public access. If these facilities could be renovated to meet accessibility standards in the building code, they would possibly remain for public use. If not, other restroom construction requiring handicap access would need to be planned for either the courtroom level or on one of the other two floors.
- (5) The room on the south west corner of the courtroom (X206) could be used for changing, traveling or temporary exhibits. Although smaller in size, the room on the north west corner of the courtroom (X202) could possibly be used for the same function.
- (6) The pair of wooden doors at the entrance to the courtroom should be studied for removal or replacement. If the area could be widened to accommodate a larger entry, the museum's exhibit area would be more attractively presented as the visitor enters the foyer from the Worth Street level. An architectural investigation of this area would need to occur in order to determine the feasibility and design of the new entrance.
- (7) The balcony section of the old courtroom deserves some specific attention. It was covered in modern paneling during one of the courtroom renovations and it is now being used as a storage area. Properly restored, this section could become an asset

for the museum's interpretive program.

Much is still intact including a pressed tin patterned ceiling and columns. It is quite possible that the tin ceiling extends into the main courtroom area, creating what could become an attractive feature for the museum. A careful "dissection" of the balcony area should be undertaken in order to determine the extent to which the space could be accurately interpreted. In addition, there appears to be a large number of county records stored in the balcony. These papers and files should be carefully examined by county and museum personnel to determine their value for future reference.

- (8) The attic space over the courtroom has interesting structural components. This area would be difficult for use or for viewing but its character should be considered for value in interpreting the building's history and architecture. Currently, there are ducts and heating/electrical equipment which have been a part of the environmental and electrical systems of the past. This area may once again need to be the chosen space for any new equipment as may be installed when the building is brought to stable and comfortable environmental conditions.
- (9) Most important to the use of Courtroom "A", office and storage areas, and the balcony area is the consideration and investigation of the capacity of the floor to physically carry the weight of the museum and its objects. Architectural verification of this use is vital before any other work can begin.
See IV. Exhibits, Recommendations 3, Section [D].

D. BASEMENT (GROUND LEVEL) - INTERIOR SPACE

The basement or ground level of the building is an advantageous space, particularly for the museum to use. There are at least eleven compartmented spaces which can allow for storage, restrooms, mechanical equipment areas, work rooms, or offices.

The entire level seems to be dry and environmentally comfortable. Drainage into the building from ground water and roof/downspout leaks appears to be halted.

RECOMMENDATIONS: BASEMENT (GROUND LEVEL) - INTERIOR SPACE

- (1) Initially, the recommendation is to use this space for current and future storage of museum artifacts and records. Because of crowded conditions in the Randolph Room of the library, where most all of the museum's collections are now stored, this level could be an ideal space for sorting, inventorying, and properly storing the historical artifacts. Museum personnel could create an

effective plan for use of this level's spaces.

The consideration of storage requirements on this and other levels might warrant an investigation of compact storage. One company whose specialty is this type of storage is the Spacesaver Corporation, 1450 Jonesville Ave., Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin 53538. In the early stages of renovation and storage planning, it is recommended that a representative be contacted for an on-site visit to discuss storage needs. Due to the unique nature of this product, the company's representative would need to consult with the building's architect to determine if the building could meet the requirements for installation.

- (2) In conjunction with storage planning, the personnel involved with decisions on the use of space should work closely with architects and engineers on the use of space needed for mechanical and electrical equipment.. Quite often, if careful planning on environmental issues is not addressed at the beginning of renovation, misunderstandings occur and a compromise on the use of space may become necessary.
- (3) A periodic inspection of the entire basement area is recommended, especially in the detection of seeping ground water. If problems are not detected early in the process, mold and insect damage can occur before it is actually discovered.
- (4) A large sink for the washing of artifacts should be planned for use on this level, with an adequate work area nearby.

II. INSTITUTIONAL AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

A. CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

In the best interest of future development, it is important to distinguish the relationships between the Randolph County Historical Society, Inc., the Randolph County Genealogical Society, and the County of Randolph. The ownership of the collections is believed to reside with the Randolph County Historical Society. The collections are stored primarily in the Randolph Room of the Public Library and administered by the library staff, principally Ms. Marsha Haithcock, the Randolph Room Librarian. No contracted agreement of ownership or control of museum assets appears to exist between the Library and the Historical Society.

RECOMMENDATIONS: INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- (1) In order to avoid misunderstandings and legal complications in the future, a document should be created which outlines the ownership, responsibilities, and

obligations of each entity involved with the assets and administration of the museum. The contract or agreement would necessarily be drawn up and signed by all parties involved. It is recommended that the creation of this document be developed early in the planning process in order that the museum project proceed with clarity and understanding.

- (2) Many documents important to the successful development of the museum should be either created or updated in the near future. A mission statement is necessary to help clarify the purpose and reasons for the museum's existence. To assist in planning for the museum's future, other documents outlining short term (the next five years) and long term (five years and beyond) goals should be created.

Other documents which should be developed in the near future are those which address ethics for staff, volunteers, and the governing authority. Collections and conservation policies are also important to address issues of acquisitions, accessioning procedures, deaccessioning procedures, and the possible disposal of collections.

- (3) New personnel employed for the museum should work closely with organizations such as the Randolph County Genealogical Society, the North Randolph Historical Society, and other smaller organizations throughout the county. A collaborative effort in the beginning days of the new museum with all county history organizations will provide significant rewards in the future and create harmony for successful group efforts.
- (4) At some point in the development of the institution, it may become advantageous to convey to the public the clear distinction between library operations and museum programs. The museum needs to be an adjunct of the library in the developmental stages of its operation but because of the nature of fund raising for specific exhibits, programs and community recognition, the consideration in the future of a more autonomous relationship of the museum could be productive.

B. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

For over eighteen years, Ms. Marsha Haithcock has ably served as the liaison and administrator of the collections in the Randolph Room. The room has become a center of research, especially on the subjects of genealogy and local history. Exhibits formed from the Historical Society's collections are located in the Randolph Room and other public areas of the Library.

The Randolph County Historical Society began early in the twentieth century but grew most effectively in 1938 when Mrs. Laura S.

Worth was appointed by the County Commissioners as “County Historian.” She maintained an office in the courthouse basement where she also gathered historical material and prepared small exhibits for the public. Her work in the preservation of local history was nationally recognized. She continued her important efforts until retirement in 1974.

Ms. Worth’s legacy continued with the work of many people including Miss Charlesanna Fox, Barbara Griggs, Carolyn Hager, Joe Suggs, and Tom Presnell, to name but a few. The joint efforts of many people have resulted in significant collections.

RECOMMENDATIONS: STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- (1) The citizens of Randolph County have expressed a desire for a larger history museum and the County Commissioners have responded by initiating commitments to make this happen. There are many ways to build staff positions but it is generally agreed that a gradual growth is preferred, especially in times of financial restrictions. A recommendation for initial staff positions, either full time or part time, is as follows:
 - a. Executive Director
Duties: Coordination and leadership in the management of all phases of museum development, including staff building and staff supervision, as liaison to the public, and as the coordinator of museum funding.
 - b. Curator of Exhibits and Collections
Duties: Developing exhibitions, acquiring collections, and caring for the collections through proper storage. At some point in the museum’s development, the duties of this position should be divided because of the obligations and workload each discipline requires.
 - c. Curator of Education and Marketing
Duties: Organizing school, youth, and adult tours of the museum, marketing the museum to the public, and assisting in research and exhibit label writing. This position also would be better served in the future by dividing the duties for two people instead of one.
 - d. Secretary/Registrar
Duties: Assisting all staff members with their duties and providing documentation and acknowledgment for all gifts

and transactions. The Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization, indicating that gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law. Documentation of gifts or loans is necessary information for both the patron and the museum record.

- (2) Professional assistance in developing effective strategies for the future of the museum is available from a variety of resources. Most of the agencies offer free advice to those institutions or individuals who are members. Some are as follows:
- a. American Association of Museums, 1575 Eye St., N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005, Telephone: 202-289-1818. A national organization of museum professionals.
 - b. American Association for State and Local History, 1717 Church St., Nashville, TN 37203-2991. A national organization of history professionals. Highly recommend.
 - c. Southeastern Museums Conference, P.O. Box 9003, Atlanta, GA 31106-1003. An organization of museum professionals in the Southeast.
 - d. North Carolina Museums Council, P.O. Box 2603, Raleigh, NC 27602-2603. A state-wide organization of museum professionals. Highly recommend.

The American Association of Museums, in addition to member benefits, offers programs of institutional self-improvement. One such program, the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) offers several phases of study in which professional staff members from other museums spend a day or two with the participating museum to give advice and suggestions on ways to improve specific areas of museum operation. Once the museum reaches a plateau of professional standards, it may apply for the Association's program of Accreditation. Accreditation is a statement of achievement through self-examination, resulting in peer approval of professional operation. From its beginning, the museum should strive for accreditation standards.

III. COLLECTIONS

The collection of artifacts and archival materials which forms the nucleus for exhibition and educational use is housed primarily in the Randolph Room of the Public Library. The collections are now stored and maintained by the library staff. There undoubtedly are many objects and collections of objects owned by other historical

agencies and individuals throughout the region which could be acquired for exhibition.

A scan of materials in the Randolph Room reveals a wide selection of local history topics. The genealogical and archival holdings are quite extensive and the three dimensional objects, while not as considerable in number, represent an effort to collect the cultural and social history of the community. The storage room adjacent to the Randolph Room is filled to capacity with documents and objects. The room's lack of space does not allow the collections to appreciably expand and also creates a condition where objects can be easily damaged. Additional storage space in the old courthouse will be welcomed to alleviate these problems.

Some of the collections and objects noted from the card catalog in the Randolph Room and on current exhibit are:

1. An official set of courthouse weights and measures
2. Drafting tools
3. Farm implements
4. Clothing and textiles
5. Family histories
6. Old books and manuscripts
7. Legal documents from the 18th through the 20th centuries
8. Architectural materials
9. Wood carvings of birds by Clarence Lewallen
10. Indian collections
11. Seashell collection
12. Excellent photographic collections
13. Militaria
14. The "Randolph Hornets" Confederate flag
15. Early newspapers

16. Farm and Domestic life
17. School and educational institutions
18. Domestic trades
19. Maps
20. Paintings and Prints
21. Archaeological records
22. Oral and written interviews with Randolph people
23. Scrap books
24. Political collections
25. Medicine
26. Religion
27. Transportation
28. Milling, Mining and Manufacturing records

These categories and many more beg for expansion and interpretation. A systematic review, verification, and documentation of the collections is an integral part of continuing the important work of the volunteer and staff efforts gone before. An assessment of the collections periodically will determine areas of collecting needs, duplication, and expansion, based on the mission statement.

RECOMMENDATIONS: COLLECTIONS

- (1) A title of ownership is necessary to clarify the roles and responsibilities of those handling and acknowledging gifts to the collections. Should donors of objects wish to deduct the value of their gift on income tax returns, proof that the organization receiving the gift is a qualified non-profit institution is necessary.
- (2) Once the collections are moved to the courthouse building, new procedures for their use will need to be enacted. The basement level of the courthouse has

ample room to develop a suitable area for many of the museum functions and services.

- (3) The Curator of Collections should develop collection policies and actively seek to increase the numbers of objects for the institution. Once exhibit and collection needs are determined, an aggressive and well- marketed effort to acquire collections would likely yield surprising results.
- (4) A variety of good computer software is available on the market for use by the museum's Registrar. The task of documenting the collections cannot be performed in short term but once the computer system is in place, the verification of catalog information and tracking the movement of objects within the museum will be much less difficult. The American Association of State and Local History can provide direction on this subject. Curators and Registrars at other museums around the state can also provide valuable assistance in choosing the best computer program to fit the needs of the institution.

IV. EXHIBITS

The exhibition program for the institution is not currently a large scale effort due to lack of space and personnel. Exhibits on local history are now presented in the public spaces of the library. The functions of a modern library cannot afford a maximum effective space for museum exhibits unless the building was functionally designed for museum activity as well. While the library staff does a good job of coordinating exhibits, they are constrained by space, a limited number of personnel, and scheduling problems.

The proposition of using old Courtroom "A" in the County Courthouse for use as exhibit space is an opportunity for unprecedented growth for the museum. The creative exhibit ideas which originate from a talented and dedicated group of volunteers and staff promise an exciting view of the future.

There are numerous approaches to the creation of an exhibition plan. One consideration is to design a plan to tell the extensive story of Randolph County's history in as much dedicated space as possible. Another approach is to build temporary or changing exhibitions rather than commit any space permanently to designated categories. A third concept is to present a combination of the two, i.e., certain sections of the museum would exhibit "permanent" themes, while other spaces would hold traveling or temporary exhibits. Because the latter approach has measurable success and obvious appeal, it is recommended as a course of action for the initial renovation.

RECOMMENDATIONS: EXHIBITS

- (1) The space known as Courtroom "A", or the X205 designation on the floor plans,

is the primary space for exhibitions. There are two public entrances to this room: one is by the front entrance and the other is from the elevator on the east side of the gallery. In order to accommodate maximum space, it is recommended that all courtroom features including the jury box, judge's bench, holding cell, benches and rails be removed and that floor level elevations initially become consistent with the level of the front entrance. If the doorway at the main entrance can be widened and possibly extended slightly higher, the approach to the museum's exhibits would be more dramatic. Once the identities to the former courtroom are removed, approximately 2080 square feet could be used for exhibition and interpretation. Architectural investigation into the removal of the wood paneling, ceiling components, and balcony enclosure would determine the feasibility of expanding or enhancing the surface interiors. The flooring should also be examined to determine its composition.

The windows in the courtroom should be covered on the interior only, leaving the exterior to be restored to their original appearance. The purpose for closing the windows is to prevent deterioration or fading to objects on display. Once the decision is made on the material to be used in closing the windows, it may be best to cover the entire wall in a solid plane, floor to ceiling.

The ceiling is another important topic to consider. Once the current panels are removed, it is possible that a pressed tin ceiling may be discovered above the paneling and beams. If this proves to be the case and the tin is in good or restorable condition, the decision may be made to expose it as a dramatic representation of the early courtroom ceiling. If this course of action is chosen, there may, however, be a problem of lighting installation. Depending on the design of the exhibits, there may be a need for overhead track lighting which would mean that a grid of some configuration would either need to be installed below or adjacent to the tin ceiling. A good lighting designer could meet this challenge with some creative ideas.

- (2) As stated earlier in the chapter on the Physical Facility, rooms X202 and X206 could be considered as spaces for temporary exhibits. There are many sources both nationally and regionally for traveling exhibitions, many of which are relative to local history and appropriate for short term engagement.
- (3) "Permanent" exhibits are often designed in a history museum to tell the core or basic history of the region. These exhibits follow a chronological time line and often parallel national history with the local story. This approach can be an effective teaching method, especially for students who are studying American history. The core history themes take a considerable amount of time to develop and care must be taken to be sensitive to all groups of people who are a part of the local story. Suggested below are some themes relative to Randolph's

history. They are not inclusive of every possibility, but represent a starting point for creative planning. The bracketed alphabet letter corresponds with floor plan details enclosed with this report.

- [A] The foyer would contain a desk along with a greeter, who would possibly be a volunteer. The desk would be strategically placed to be seen by visitors who enter the area from either of the two stairways. Also, it might be possible to allow the greeter to have direct vision to the elevator for those visitors who enter from that side. The most advantageous condition would be one greeter in the foyer and one in the main gallery near the elevator. If only one greeter is possible, however, that person should be in the foyer. Signage at the elevator could direct visitors to the main entrance. Security cameras in the elevator are also a possibility to enhance visitor control.

Examples of exhibits in this area would be very introductory in theme. Informational panels on the museum, its history, staff positions, means of community support, and a floor plan of the exhibits in the main gallery are possible topics. There could also be exhibits on the land which is now Randolph County - its geological origins, the soil (much of which makes the pottery industry so productive) and large, mural size photographs of the county's natural features (Uwharrie Mountains, Deep River, or rock formations on Ridge's Mountain). There could also be a large map of the county with geographical information on each township and community.

Depending on future budgetary requests, a line item for printing in the museum's budget would allow for informative brochures to be distributed at the front desk. As the printing budget increases, a program of monographs on local history, catalogs of exhibitions, gallery guides or bibliographies on local themes could be developed.

- [B] This section would be the first area for the visitor to experience inside the main gallery. Most visitors tend to walk to the right upon entering a gallery unless emphatic signage directs elsewhere. The exhibits here could focus on the first Americans and the coming of the English and Europeans. Dramatic paintings or drawings of Native American hunting, farming, and domestic life near displays of artifacts add a lot of appeal to understanding the story of the county's first settlers. With current technological

resources, it is feasible to acquire a forensic sculpture of a man or woman from archeologically obtained skeletal remains. A forensic presentation from the Keyauwee site might be possible.

The time line in this section could extend into the era of the County's founding in 1779. Many of the early settlement patterns could be explored through exhibits and panels of information. Early families whose names are still extant in Randolph County could be listed in the text. It is important, however, to strive to achieve an interesting and easily read narrative in as few words as possible. Labels or informational panels that are too verbose can easily disinterest the reader and occupy too much valuable exhibit space. The exhibits should also be built with consideration for all visitors, including children and citizens using wheelchairs.

Note: Due to the probability of the primary restroom facilities situated in the southeast section of this gallery, the exhibits for [B] would need to be designed to accommodate the traffic to and from these restrooms.

[C] This section could interpret the County's history from about 1779 to 1850. Telling the story of Randolph's past within this era is rich with many possibilities. Some of the themes to be examined include:

1. Colonial history - how the county and city of Asheboro received their names, c.1800 map of Randolph County, Mount Shepherd archaeological findings, the county's beginnings.
2. Domestic life in the 18th and 19th centuries - architecture, farming, food, lighting in the home, children and the family, everyday life, birth, death, home remedies, African Americans, slavery, weaving and textiles.
3. Government - County seats (Cross Road, Johnstoneville, Asheboro), early elective processes, taxes, crime and punishment, the laws, courthouses, weights and measures, possible transfer of courthouse bell to the exhibit gallery.

4. Churches and Religion - Sandy Creek Baptist, missionaries, Quakers, cemeteries, evangelists, John Wesley's stand - every denomination represented in the county during this era.
5. Domestic trades - blacksmithing, furniture making, saddlery, tanning and tanyards, beginnings of the pottery industry, ornamental painters and carpenters.
6. Education - academies, early educators
7. Regulator and Revolutionary War incidents - Martha McGee Bell, Lord Cornwallis, Bell's Mill, Col. Andrew Balfour, Cox's Mill, David Fanning.
8. Immigrant groups - Germans, Scots, Scot-Irish, English, African Americans
9. Retail Shops and Services - buggy shops, general merchandise, newspapers, pottery, rifles
10. Manufacturing - early industry within this era
11. Milling - early mills along Deep River and its tributaries
12. Mining - early attempts at gold mining
13. Politics and Elections - electoral process, parties, "causes", candidates, rallies, campaigns
14. Prominent citizens - individuals and families who have made a difference

[D] A history museum's exhibitions laid out in a chronological order in one large gallery are often more attractive if the central part of the gallery has a prominent feature. This style of presentation gives a pleasing design to the room by emphasizing a large object in the center. This feature provides a compelling attraction for the patron to visit either visually or physically during the gallery tour.

The object does not need to "fit" into an adjoining

historical era but simply to give emphasis to the room. This feature can be an artifact such as a loom to express the county's textile history or a wagon to relate to the plank road. It could also be a small structure such as a house or a shop.

For purposes of illustration, the exhibit team could decide that a small log house be erected in the center of the room. It could be only two rooms: one, a kitchen and the other, a combination sleeping room and family interactive area. The structure could have a central hall with interior walls removed and replaced with heavy lucite to allow visitors, including children, to see the exhibit rooms without obstruction.

The interior spaces could be illuminated to showcase the objects of every day life. A fireplace with ironware, pottery, and food preparation utensils would be a focal point of one room. The other room could contain chairs, chests, beds, tables, lighting devices, textiles and other furnishings that reflect early 18th or 19th century life and the lifestyle of the family who may have occupied the house.

The exterior of the structure could have windows, a stone foundation, log construction, a stone chimney, and, for purposes of demonstration, an unfinished roof. By exposing the framing of the rafters, the visitor can view some of the construction techniques of early house framing. To add interest to the scene, mannequins of either realistic or abstract proportions could be in various poses on the framing, demonstrating how various carpentry and framing tools were used. The presence of a small building this size and weight, however, would pose structural considerations for the courthouse. The building's architects would need to check the structure for its ability to carry the weight of a centralized feature. There may prove to be additional costs in preparing the floor to accommodate the weight of museum objects, exhibits and the presence of staff and visitors. See I. Physical Facility, C., Recommendation (9).

[E] This section of the museum could interpret the County's

history from about 1851 to 1910. This area is not as large in wall space because of the position of three doors but it nevertheless could potentially present a fair representation of the period. Some of the themes to be considered include:

1. Towns and Communities - early beginnings and development of such communities as New Market, Cedar Falls, Central Falls, Randleman, Trinity, Franklinville and many more.
2. Families prominent in regional history
3. Professions - Medicine and Dentistry, Attorneys, Banking
4. Politics and Elections
5. Mining - A very active industry in the 19th and early 20th centuries, with over 33 mines known.
6. Milling - a very noteworthy industry throughout the county - saw mills and grist mills.
7. The Civil War and its aftermath - uniforms, weapons, accoutrements, flags, etc.
8. Manufacturing - textiles, pottery and brick making, furniture, many others.
9. Farming and agriculture
10. Architecture in the county
11. Folklore - Naomi Wise
12. Education - schools and academies, Trinity College
13. Churches and Religion

14. Government
15. Domestic Life
16. Transportation - importance of railroads, covered bridges, first automobile

[F] The west wall of the museum wall could cover the era of the 20th century. An abundance of subjects could be represented here and while none could be explained in explicit detail, the visitor would be exposed to many of the important themes of the county's identity, which could include the following:

1. Manufacturing - hosiery, textiles, technology, furniture, etc.
2. Retail establishments - farm supply, general merchandise, hardware stores, jewelry stores
3. Hotels and restaurants
4. Immigrant groups - Asian, Mexican and Latino populations
5. Leisure activities - hunting (Brokaw Lodge and estate), fishing, the North Carolina Zoo, sports (baseball, football, basketball, etc.), parades, pageants, holiday events, county fairs, movie theaters, Uwharrie trail
6. Industry - Petty Enterprises, wearing apparel, buggy shops, pottery and ceramics
7. Natural events - floods, heavy snows, Hurricane Hazel in 1954
8. Families - Randolph County Genealogical Society assistance
9. Medicine - 1918 Flu epidemic, dentistry, home remedies

10. Banking
11. Government
12. Politics and elections
13. Mining and Milling
14. World Wars I and II, Vietnam, the home front, Korea, Cold War (bomb shelters), National Guard and Reserves, Gulf War, Iraq
15. Education - Elementary and high schools, RTI, RCC, one room schoolhouses
16. Religion and churches - Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, Presbyterians, Jews, Catholics, Holiness, Christian, immigrant religions, evangelists, all denominations
17. Communication - newspapers, radio stations, postal services, telephone, television
18. Civic and Youth organizations - Scouts, 4-H, Pioneers, Rotary, Kiwanis, Sertoma, Lions, DAR, UDC, SCV, Masons, Shriners, others
19. Art and Architecture
20. Government
21. Domestic Life - kitchen appliances, changing role of women, housing and urban development
22. Transportation - automobile, airplanes and airports, street and road development, bus lines, taxicabs, railroads, covered bridges

[G] The balcony level presents an opportunity to expand the

themes represented in the museum area below it. Once the storage areas are removed, the possibility of using the space for either changing exhibits or extensions of exhibits already established is very positive. The stairway entrance to this level could be restored to match the stairways below, allowing an attractive entry to all levels of the building. Once the decision is made on the extent of restoration in this area (such as exposing a restored tin ceiling), a variety of topics could be represented in exhibits.

Realistically, the story of Randolph County's history cannot be adequately presented in the spaces allotted on the courtroom and balcony areas. The rich and diverse people and events in the area's history are too numerous to give detailed explanation. The challenge is not unique to Randolph but is one that is faced by historical museums all over the country. One possible attempt to find a solution to this dilemma is to change exhibits often, but not too often. There are certain themes and objects in the visitor's familiarity with the museum which beckon return visits but exhibits within chronological time line can be changed with careful planning. Once the museum achieves a visual presence in the community, the staff should be able to measure the "pulse" of its visitors by evaluating visitor response.

When determining the direction of initial exhibit construction, the staff and exhibit team may wish to employ an exhibit design firm. Concepts, designs, advice, fabrication, research and writing are but some of the services available. It is recommended that once an exhibit concept is formulated, a prompt decision should follow on the procedure of carrying out the plan. If the decision is made to develop the exhibits locally with staff supervision, there are many talented craftsmen in the area to do the work. If the exhibits are to be designed and fabricated either in part or fully by a professional exhibits firm, there are several notable ones throughout the country. Some of these include:

- (1) Maltbie, 708 Fellowship Road, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054
Telephone: 856-234-3448
- (2) D & P Design and Production, Inc., 7110 Rainwater Place, Lorton, VA
Telephone: 703-550-8640
- (3) John P. Oberholtzer, 3102 Solara Trace, Greensboro, NC 27410
Office Telephone: 336-931-1204 Home Telephone: 336-665-9141
- (4) Steve W. Hinnant
Hinnant Group, 1100 Barkley Road, Studio A, Charlotte, NC 28209
Telephone: 704-342-1122

In addition, two firms which can provide specialized services are:

- (1) MBA Design and Display Products Corp.,
35 E. Uwchlan Ave., Suite 318, Exton, Pa 19341
Distributors of Mila-Wall, a product which lends itself very well to temporary exhibits.
- (2) Dorfman Museum Figurines, Inc., Baltimore, MD
Telephone: 1-800-634-4873 or 1-410-284-3248.
A supplier of museum mannequins.

Several museum and historical agencies around the state can also be of immediate assistance. Staff at the Greensboro Historical Museum, High Point Museum, and the Cape Fear Museum in Wilmington have worked with both local and national exhibit firms. This sharing of information should prove very helpful.

An exhibits review committee, meeting periodically throughout the exhibit planning process from year to year, should be representative of the community. This committee's active participation will be a strong advocate in the community for acceptance and promotion of any exhibits plan. The Director and Curator of Exhibits would coordinate this process.

V. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

A local historical museum is one of the most important assets for a thriving community. It provides a vehicle for the interpretation of local history and, if properly promoted, can be a source of pride for citizens and visitors. Among the responsibilities of the position of Curator of Education are the duties of bringing the public to the museum and taking the museum to the public. These opportunities for public promotion of the museum are not confined to the Curator of Education alone, however, but are responsibly recognized by the entire staff and all who are part of the museum.

RECOMMENDATIONS: EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- (1) Once the exhibits have been publicly opened and made available, a formalized tour program should soon follow. A volunteer program of trained docents or tour guides is a valuable asset to the museum. Not only will the volunteers assist the staff by providing effective tours, but they also become effective ambassadors for the museum throughout the community.
- (2) Tour programs can be personalized for kindergarten through high school as well as for college and adult groups. More specialized tours may be developed for temporary exhibits. There are a number of opportunities to bring groups into the museum based upon the exhibit themes. "Traveling Trunks" is another program to be considered for taking the museum into the community.

- (3) Public speaking in the community by staff and volunteers is an effective method of informing the public on the value of the museum. Civic clubs, book and garden clubs, and other specialized groups are always looking for speakers. If the staff finds itself too extended in duties to fulfill a busy speaking schedule, a volunteer speaker's bureau could be established.
- (4) An active membership support group organized to assist the museum in fund development can also be very effective in establishing good community relationships. A strong organization of this type can promote funds and provide support for the acquisition of collections, fabrication of exhibits, speaker forums, rental of traveling exhibits, and as a nucleus for the recruitment of volunteers.

The limited number of staff people cannot possibly perform all the work required for maximum success in every museum venture. It is vital that volunteers become an integral part of the workday, assuming duties of greeters, tour guides, curatorial assistants, fund raisers, speakers, and researchers. Their work will allow the museum to move much more rapidly toward its goals.

- (5) A frequent notification of activities to the news media is vitally effective. Staff should become familiar with the contacts for local and regional promotion and provide topical updates of activities and exhibits. Regular communication with the Tourism Development Authority, Economic Development Authority and other agencies of this type should be initiated.

VI. CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

Once the museum is established, the disciplines of conservation and preservation must be considered in the planning process. For this report, the term "conservation" applies to the protection of the building, its occupants, the exhibits, and the collection from discomfort, neglect or deterioration. The term "preservation" applies to the sustained maintenance and renewal of the building and its contents.

The electrical, heating, humidity, water, and environmental systems appear to need complete upgrading. A gas fired boiler has been installed to provide enough heat to prevent deterioration. A fire alarm system is in place.

RECOMMENDATIONS: CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

- (1) All electrical components in the building need to be assessed for the probability of the need for new wiring, fixtures, and circuit boxes.
- (2) New heating, air conditioning, and environmental controls should be installed. Humidity and temperature levels need to be constantly controlled to avoid mold,

mildew and deterioration.

- (3) Water pipes and systems should be evaluated for pollution and contamination.
- (4) Large sinks should be installed in strategic areas where artifacts will be washed.
- (5) All restrooms designated for use by the public and staff need to be completely renovated.
- (6) The fire alarm should be integrated into an upgraded security and fire system. Motion detectors, door and window contacts should be installed once a plan for the use of each area is created. A personnel evacuation plan should be prepared and posted.
- (7) Asbestos and lead removal would be required before occupancy.
- (8) The maintenance of the courthouse, including custodial service, should be understood through a contractual agreement.
- (9) All interior walls, floors, and ceilings should be repaired and restored, as mutually agreed upon by museum and County officials.
- (10) The basement level should be monitored at least twice annually to detect any moisture entering the storage areas.
- (11) Gutters and downspouts should be monitored annually for proper drainage.
- (12) New lighting should be planned for storage areas and offices. Exhibit illumination and lighting in public areas would be part of a professional lighting design plan.
- (13) Documents, original photographs, textile, or other fragile objects should be either rotated from exhibit annually or reproductions fabricated in place of original objects.

The museum may some day wish to place the courthouse on the National Register of Historic Places. This status would give the building national recognition and focus the attention of preservationists on its significance. A listing on the National Register would also generate a feeling of pride within the community.

CONCLUSION

The people of Randolph County are presented with an excellent opportunity to not only save an historic building but also to create an outstanding museum to celebrate the region's colorful and glorious past. The County is to be commended for providing financial and moral support for the commencement of what could easily become one of the finest museums in the state, if not the Southeast. No obstacles are observed which would prevent the museum from becoming a significant regional attraction in one of the great architectural treasures of North Carolina. It is fitting and appropriate that the creation of a history museum within the walls of this significant building will not only continue the legacy of historic preservation in North Carolina but will also enable the story of Randolph County's rich history to be told. The opportunities of a generous exhibit gallery, adequate office and storage space, and maintenance support are rarely encountered in a museum's initial development. Once plans are formulated to restore and renovate the building and to construct the museum in its interior, the base of volunteer and community support should be greatly elevated.

The consultant wishes to thank Richard Wells, Director of the Library; Marsha Haithcock, Librarian in the Randolph Room; Bill McDaniel, Randolph County's Supervisor of Maintenance; Barron Mills and Camilla White of the Randolph County Historical Society; and David Townsend, Public Works Director for Randolph County, for their assistance in providing significant information for this report.

The consultant would also like to acknowledge the work and ongoing commitment of the Randolph County Historic Courthouse Committee. This committee represents an important step into the future to plan and perpetuate a museum of significant magnitude—the Randolph County Historical Museum.

William J. Moore