

REUBEN BROWN HOUSE
PRESERVATION SOCIETY
**Historic Plaque Program for Columbus County
Program Outline and Application**

Columbus County has a rich collection of historic homes and buildings. We're proud to celebrate our unique heritage through the Reuben Brown House Preservation Society (RBHPS) Historic Landmark Plaque Program.

We invite you to share the history of your historic site (home, business, church, cemetery, tobacco barn, etc.) by purchasing a custom-made historic plaque for display at your site. This program is sponsored by the Reuben Brown House Preservation Society (RBHPS). Its purpose is to raise public awareness of Columbus County's history, its unique silvicultural and agricultural heritage, and to encourage its preservation. Your historic site need not be an officially designated landmark or within an historic district to participate in the RBHPS Plaque Program.

The program is completely voluntary, and your participation in no way impacts or restricts your property rights or potential modifications to your site. The program is focused primarily on building exteriors, so your property will not be inspected to verify its eligibility. At some point in the future, the program hopes to offer public tours of Columbus County's historic areas and properties. Thank you for your participation!

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for a Columbus County Historic Plaque, a site must meet the following criteria:

- be at least 75 years old
- be located in the County of Columbus
- retain its original character
- be in a good state of preservation
- contribute to the historical or architectural nature of the county

At the discretion of the RBHPS Plaque Review Committee, limited exceptions may be made for sites of extraordinary architectural or historical significance.

APPLICATION

To apply for a plaque, complete the attached application in full. Please make an effort to be as thorough as possible, as this will assist the Plaque Review Committee in reviewing the information on your property. A sample completed application is available upon request.

Instructions for submitting your completed application, along with any supportive documentation, are provided later in this document.

RESEARCH

Research for the application should be done by the property owner and is not a service provided by the program. A list of resources to use when researching the history of your site is attached to help you in this process. Please keep in mind that the information you gather is to help create a permanent record of your site and will be available to historians and researchers for years to come. The application and all additional information generated by your research will be permanently filed with the Reuben Brown House Preservation Society Plaque Program.

PLAQUE TEXT/SITE NAME

The format for all plaques is the same, with only the name of the site and year built varying for each plaque. An example of an actual plaque is shown below. The Plaque Review Committee will determine the name of your site and establish the text for the plaque, based on the information you provide on your application. When possible, residential buildings will be named for the original owners or resident. Names of other owners or residents may be used if they occupied the building for a significant period of time, if they made significant architectural changes to the building, or if they are deemed to have been especially important to the history of Columbus County. Commercial buildings (and some residential) may be named for their original use, owner, or other historically relevant facts. On the application you may make suggestions for your site name and you will be given the opportunity to approve the plaque text prior to its being ordered.

APPROVAL AND PRICE

Custom plaques are offered in high-quality cast aluminum for qualifying properties. The standard plaque is 8" H x 10" W and covers the actual cost of the plaque, a small administrative fee, tax and shipping. (Larger plaques are also available.) Once your application has been reviewed and approved, you will be notified of your eligibility to purchase a plaque. The plaque fee must be paid in full before the plaque will be ordered.



**Historic
Plaque Example**

FOR COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION

Research Suggestions:

1. Identify who has owned your property. One way to do this is to start by reading the current deed on record and working your way backward. Most deeds make reference to the deed that they replaced and also a plat that shows the building on the land.
 - a. Start with online research of your property via the Columbus County website. Visit the GIS systems on the site for “Land Record”, “Current Owner” and deed recording information. The “ACT YR BLT” on the tax card may or may not be accurate.
 - b. Once you identify the deed book and page # of the recent owners, look up the actual deeds on the Columbus County Register of Deeds’ website. Use the “Document Inquiry” feature to view the actual deeds and recorded plats online.
 - c. Next visit the Columbus County Register of Deeds to trace the ownership history further back from where you left off online. At this office, the actual deeds and plats are catalogued in books back to the 1800’s.

2. Learn about the people and the building. The internet offers only a limited amount of information about historical people and places, but there are many other great resources to assist you.
 - a. Visit Columbus County Public Library in Whiteville. The Alice L. Lowe North Carolina Room at the Carolyn T. High Library contains an abundance of local history resources, newspaper archives, census information, etc. Kim Moore, Genealogy Librarian (910-641-3976), is available to help with research.
 - b. On-line resources are available at Columbusco.org>Departments>Library>Local History and Genealogy and/or Local History Photo Collection.
 - c. If you can find any living descendants of the original owners, contact them for more information. Their personal stories help to bring the research to life.

Other Research Resources

- CENTURY FARMS, N. C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
- CHADBOURN AND HER SUNNY SOUTH COLONY, Glenn F. Strole
- COLUMBUS COUNTY RECOLLECTIONS AND RECORDS (manuscripts and final edition), Bicentennial Commission
- COLUMBUS COUNTY NORTH CAROLINA HERITAGE 1808 – 2004, copyright 2004
- COLUMBUS CHRONICLES, edited by Alice Soles, Volume 1 (2008) and Volume 2 (2010)
- UNC-W Randall Library – resources specific to Lake Waccamaw
- UNC-CH Wilson Library – resources specific to Chadbourn and the Sunny South Colony