

Richmond County Historical Society

'Those who don't remember their ancestors don't deserve to be remembered!'

October 2018 Newsletter

The Sounds of Southern Music



Dr. John D. Beck

Hurricane Florence caused cancellation of the Historical Society's September 17th program meeting, however the October meeting will make up for lost time by offering a free lunch at the City of Rockingham's beautiful Lake Hinson park. Watch for the entrance on East Washington street extension.

The lunch meeting will be on Saturday, Oct. 20 beginning at 11 a. m. Lunch will be served in the lodge on the lake.

Please call RCHS treasurer Joanne Cadieu at 895-1660 to make your free lunch reservation. Or email at jwcadieu@etinternet.net.

The program for the meeting will be given by Dr. John D. Beck. He was scheduled for the Sept. 17 meeting, however was able to reschedule for the Saturday, Oct. 20 meeting.

His history of much of music in the South will begin by examining music from parts of the world where many of the early settlers of the South were from: The British Isles and West Africa.

Then Dr. Beck will briefly explore a number of popular music styles that developed in the South including country, bluegrass, jazz, rhythm, gospel and blues.

Dr. Beck holds a Ph. D. in American History from UNC-Chapel Hill with a specialty in Southern History. He has written a number of articles and essays on topics in Southern history and has made numerous presentations on Southern topics at public programs and professional meetings across the country.

He is co-author of *Southern Culture: An Introduction* and is currently working on a history of Southern food.

He is retired from a career in the N. C. Community College system. He has taught at Elon University since 2007

Richmond County has military relationship



Airborne Paratroopers line up at Camp Mackall during World War II training

Richmond County has had a long military-related history.

Soldiers traveled throughout the county during the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. The loyalties of some residents then were at times very divided.

However, in 1917, the North Carolina Governor came to Richmond County and made a passionate call for local citizens to sacrifice during World War I. This patriotic event was said to be the largest at that time in the state.

Over 600 men in the county, answered the call, either volunteering or by conscription, to serve in WWI. Also in response, farmers plowed up cotton to plant food crops.

After WWII began for America on December 8, 1941, Richmond County became considered a military target. Hamlet police, firefighters and special agents of the Seaboard Air Line Railway were on alert for sabotage.

Troops were sent here to protect the Blewett Falls Hydroelectric Plant, the Morrison Bridge over the Pee Dee River and the Hamlet Railroad Yards. The eight Rockingham Textile Mills were placed on alert.

We became a military-based county in 1942 when Camp Hoffman (later Camp Mackall) was constructed near Hoffman.

From that time forward, Richmond County has been part of the military strategy connected to Fort Bragg.

The prelude to WWII training at Camp Mackall was the 1941 large-scale Army maneuver held here. Thousands of troops filled the fields and towns of Richmond County.

This maneuver was the largest peace-time mobilization in the history of the United States. By October 6, 1941, there were about 100,000 troops here.

Hamlet businessmen issued an invitation for troops to make Hamlet their headquarters while off duty so everyone could become acquainted. When the troops did arrive in 1941, local stores were overwhelmed with soldiers. They had to close their doors early when they ran out of goods to sell. Rockingham's four policemen were assisted by 92 military policemen to keep order.

Eleven days after the maneuvers were concluded, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.