

Welcome to our special page where we share news and information about Ocracoke Village, Ocracoke Island and Village Craftsmen.

On Thursday, May 25, the Hyde County Arts Council sponsored a fun evening of folk dance at the Ocracoke Community Center. Bill and Libby Hicks provided live music on fiddle and keyboard. David Tweedie joined in for a few tunes also. Over 75 people came out to carry on a long-time island tradition.

Dances included line dances and waltzes.

Islanders and Visitors Learn a New Dance



But the highlight of the evening was our very own Ocracoke “Square Dance.” The dance floor was so full of energetic, enthusiastic, smiling locals and visitors that we sometimes bumped into each other, but that just added to the fun.

In spite of its name our dance is not a western-style square dance.

Begun in a large circle, but progressing to two-couple sets, this dance quickly involves everyone in a series of swings, promenades and marches. It includes elements that are often familiar (“four-hands round,” “the star,” and “dive for the oyster, dig for the clam”) but it is put together in a unique fashion and incorporates several features distinctive to Ocracoke. My father and my grand-parents danced this dance as young people, and I remember it fondly from my adolescence in the mid-1950’s.

“Promenade...and Ring your Dishrag!”



Research suggests that the Ocracoke dance was probably brought to the island by the earliest settlers from the British Isles. It was performed regularly on Saturday nights

(sometimes more often) as far back as anyone can remember. Because it is unique to Ocracoke experts believe that it may reflect a very early English dance that has remained relatively unchanged for more than two hundred years.

If you will be on the island for the Ocracoke Festival on June 10 be sure to stop by the school gym from 8:30 to 10:00 p.m. for another evening of dance and great music. The Ocracoke dance is very easy to learn and requires no fancy steps. It is basically just movement around the dance floor. Nevertheless it can be quite graceful and lots of fun! Even if you won't be dancing, drop in to enjoy the music and to watch us cut a step!

On Saturday, May 27, Ocracoke Preservation Society sponsored another Howard Street Arts and Crafts Fair. There was a wide assortment of crafts on display including pottery, stained glass, wood carvings, sewing and paintings.

Local Pottery on Display



In addition, local musicians treated us to a delightful repertoire of songs and ballads. Of course some great food was also available, including breads, cakes and traditional Ocracoke Island fig cake!

Quilts and Jewelry for Sale



The Fair is always a fun and exciting way to spend a couple of hours on Memorial Day weekend. Join us next year if you can.

Readers continue to ask for information about the many fine craftspeople who supply our gallery with the wide variety of quality U.S. crafts we carry.

In this newsletter we feature Clay Walthall, potter and fine artist. We have carried Clay's

pottery since the 1970's; and we have been displaying his original lighthouse prints for several years.

Clay Walthall



Clay is a native of Petersburg, Virginia. He received a Master's degree in art, with concentrations in painting and pottery from Radford University, in 1982. As part of a wide range of professional art positions he operates a production pottery in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and paints regularly in his studio. His lighthouse series was inspired by work done by children and by children's book illustration.

Clay's fine art is created in watercolor, in the realist tradition, following the example of artists like Winslow Homer and Andrew Wyeth. The Outer Banks and Ocracoke Island, a favorite place of his since childhood, inspires much of his work.

Bodie Island Light by Clay Walthall



Clay currently lives and works in New Market, Virginia and travels to Ocracoke as often as possible.

From now through the end of June click on the specials link above to see samples of Clay's art (all of his prints are 10% off in June-so be sure to use the specials link!). You can see Clay's work anytime by clicking on the following links:

[Pottery](#)

[Lighthouse Series](#)

Be sure to check our web site frequently. Go to What's New to see what we've added or changed since your last visit.

Until we see you again be sure to take time for yourself and for relaxation. It's good practice for your next visit to the island!

Philip and the entire staff of Village Craftsmen