THE BIG DITCH

Big Ditch Run

In This Issue

Completed Project: Digitized Photos

Who was Marion Hargrove?

Share Your Story

Upcoming Programs

Local History

library.localhistory@waynegov.com

919.735.1824 ext 1830

WAYNE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Celebrating a New Year

By Anna Mitchell, Local History Librarian

Wayne County Public Library Local History Collection

"AND NOW WE WELCOME THE NEW YEAR. FULL OF THINGS THAT HAVE NEVER BEEN."
— RAINER MARIA RILKE

It seems nearly impossible, but here we are - 2025! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and spent as much time as possible with those who are nearest and dearest to you.

A new year is a beautiful thing. As we settle into this new year, I hope that you'll make learning more about local history a part of your 2025. Stop by the Local History room or attend one of our many programs. We would love to see you!

Project Complete: Digitized Photograph Collection

By Anna Mitchell, Local History Librarian

You might recall that last summer, we embarked on a project to digitize our entire Local History General Photograph Collection. Our summer intern, Davia, got a wonderful start on this project and it was completed by Local History Assistant Kai White. Our general photograph collection consists of eight boxes which each hold multiple folders - this was quite an undertaking!

In addition to scanning the photos, we also completed descriptive metadata - a spreadsheet with information about the photos. This is a huge step toward a more accessible Local History archive. We invite you to stop by sometime and view our photograph collection as well as the many other items in our Local History collection. Below is a glimpse of our digitized photos!

Who was Marion Hargrove?
The Mount Olive Boy Who Made It Big

By Anna Mitchell,
Local History Librarian

Marion Hargrove is a name that, when mentioned in our community, may - or very well may not - ring a bell. But it should. Hargrove was a Wayne County native who eventually found fame as a successful author and screenplay writer.

Lillian Royall's First Grade Class at Mount Olive Elementary School, 1926. Hargrove is on the second row, far left.

He was born Edward Thomas Marion Lawton Hargrove, Jr. on October 13, 1919 in Mount Olive. He spent the formative years of his childhood in Wayne County before moving away when he was 10. In 1927, an injury to his leg left him stuck in bed to heal for several months. During that time, he found his true loves: reading and writing.

Hargrove wrote for his high school paper before being hired with the Charlottes News. In 1941, when he was drafted into the Army, the paper asked him to continue writing a column which was called "In the Army Now." Later, the columns were compiled into a book titled *See Here, Private Hargrove!* It's success was overwhelming and it was later turned into an MGM Studios feature film starring Robert Walker and Donna Reed. This was the launch of a highly successful writing career for Hargrove. All of this excitement occurred while he was still enlisted. When he was discharged, he didn't publish another work until 1948. But from then on, his career took off and he became the man behind some of Hollywood's most recognizable productions.

Above: Marion Hargrove while enlisted in the US Army.

Right: The promotional poster for See Here, Private Hargrove.
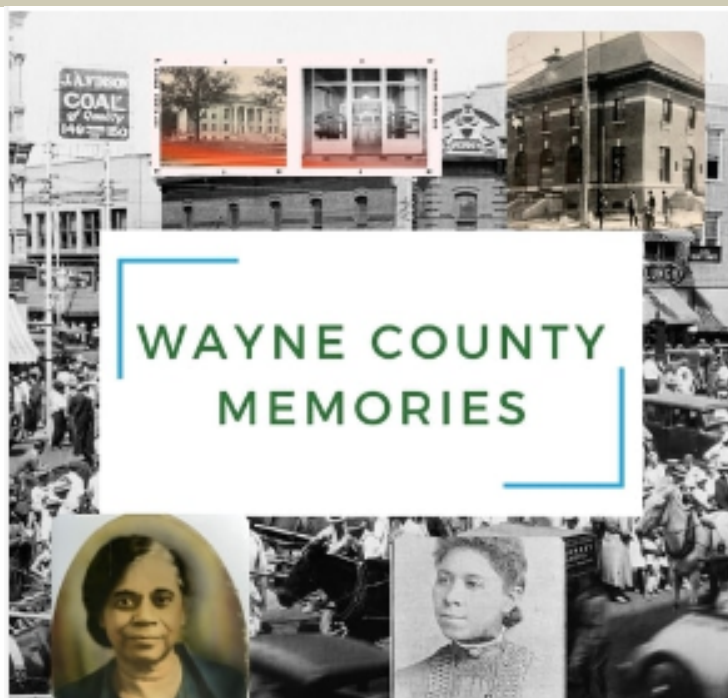
Marion Hargrove continued...

In 1956, Hargrove published *The Girl He Left Behind*, which was made into a movie starring Natalie Wood. After that, he moved to California to focus on writing for television and movies. He became a principal writer on *Maverick* and also wrote episodes of *The Waltons, I Spy, Fantasy Island, Eight is Enough*, and many others. He also wrote screenplays for multiple films, including *The Music Man.* This was undoubtedly a career highlight for which he won the award for Best Written American Musical.

In 1997, Hargrove agreed to donate his personal collection to Steele Memorial Library. It consists of manuscripts, articles, photographs, letters, and so much more.

Hargrove passed away in 2003, but his legacy as a Wayne County native who made it big lives on.

Everyone has a story. We want to hear yours.

Here in Local History, we believe that everyone has a story and that each person's experience helps to shape our community memory.

We are currently seeking interviewees for Oral History interviews, and we are also looking for contributions for our Digital Exhibits. If you would be interested in conducting an Oral History interview with us or contributing photos or memories to our exhibit, contact us.

You have a story to tell - we want to hear it.

Upcoming Programs

January

Getting Started with Local History

January 7, 4:00 PM | Local History Room

Have you always been curious about the Local History room? Start the new year by joining us for this informational session about our local history resources and how to use them! Space is limited – registration required..

Getting Started with Fold3

January 9, 3:00 PM | Local History Room

Reading the penmanship of the past can prove to be one of the largest stumbling blocks to doing historical research. Join us for this informational session and workshop and learn tips and tricks for deciphering those tricky cursive letters.

What's That Say?

January 15, 3:00 PM } Steele Memorial Library

Join us for a session filled with tips for reading tricky cursive handwriting on historical documents. Please call 919-299-8105 ext. 5351 to register.

Local History Trivia

January 16, 6:00 PM | Gertrude Weil Auditorium

Test your knowledge of our local history with a night of Local History Trivia! Form a team and earn prizes

Oral History Training

January 21, 4:00 PM | Local History Room

Join us in the Local History Room for an informational session about how to conduct Oral History interviews and their importance to local history! Registration required.

Digitization Workshop

January 30, 4:00 PM | Local History Room

Join us in the Local History Room for an informational session about the best practices for digitizing historic documents and photos. We will practice digitizing on our archival scanner, so bring a photograph or document to scan! (Limit 3 items per person.) Space is limited. Registration required.

Call 919-735-1824 ext. 1830 or email
library.localhistory@waynegov.com to register!