

## County libraries host exhibit

# Historic locales are in danger

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Staff Writer

A regional display about threatened historic places, including sites in Southport and Caswell Beach, is on display at the Leland Library through September 20.

After that, Historic Wilmington Foundation's 2017 Most Threatened Historic Places traveling exhibit will move to the Barbee Library on Oak Island until October 11. The exhibit will then be at the Harper Library in Southport through November 1 and later travel to Pender and New Hanover counties.

The exhibit highlights the region's historic buildings and sites that are most vulnerable to demolition, deterioration or neglect, and illustrates the importance of historic preservation. Now in its sixth year, the exhibit includes sites important to Brunswick County, including the Fort Caswell rifle range, several private and family Brunswick County cemeteries and the new listing for the John N. Smith Cemetery in Southport.

Every year in May, in recognition of National Preservation Month, the foundation releases a new list of Most Threatened Historic Places to raise awareness about the places most at risk of being lost forever. Since 2006, the foundation has published the list to focus attention on irreplaceable historic resources and raise public awareness. The 2010 list was instrumental in encouraging Brunswick County to complete its first inventory of historic sites.

The foundation accepts recommendations for at-risk sites anytime, and currently nominations are being accepted for the 2018 list. To make a nomination or learn more about the foundation, e-mail director George Edwards at [edwards@historicwilmington.org](mailto:edwards@historicwilmington.org).

The Smith cemetery is the only graveyard that interred African-Americans in Brunswick County. It is loosely operated by a group of churches, and supporters hope to raise enough money to locate and properly mark all graves. In some instances, the dead were buried without markers. In other cases, old wooden markers have decayed. Frank Gordon, the county's first black educator, is among the notable residents buried there.

To learn more about the cemetery, visit <http://johnsmithcemetery.org/home.html>.

The Fort Caswell rifle range pit is a rare physical reminder of the



Photo supplied  
Leland resident Steve Colacchio and Lisa Milligan, Leland Library director, pose with the traveling exhibit at the library.

Great War. Built a century ago, it was used to train soldiers in long-range marksmanship before they were shipped off to fight in Europe.

The structure suffers from neglect and intrusion by tree roots. Supporters have made temporary repairs, cleaned out the pit and removed offending trees. They are trying to raise enough money for a long-range, engineered solution. To learn more, visit [www.caswellriflerange.com](http://www.caswellriflerange.com).