



# Bleeding Pines of Turpentine

A spirit-filled woods, trees marked with V-shaped cuts by former slaves or their descendants, and an age-old tale about a woman's heroic carriage ride into the region's last great stand of virgin longleaf pines are the inspiration for writer/historian Ray Owen's cultural theater production "Bleeding Pines of Turpentine." Staged at Old Bethesda Presbyterian, the Civil War-era church in Aberdeen, this multi-arts performance will utilize dance, music, projected images and dramatic readings in a celebration of the strange beauty of the turpentine trees in Southern Pines — a town named for its forests.

Hundreds of turpentine trees remain in the Weymouth section of Southern Pines, probably more than in any other town in America, their trunks scarred with gashes to let loose the flow of sap collected for turpentine, pitch and rosin. Many of them are vestiges of the virgin forest, hundreds of years old. They are marked in a way that shapes us as a community, spared from the axe in the early twentieth century by a remarkable woman named Helen Boyd Dull.

Based on a narrative by Ray Owen, the performance will showcase a variety of artistic talent. A ritual pipe band march, lead by Wake & District Public Safety Pipes & Drums, will signal the start of the three-act program. Act One, titled "The Thirsty Desert," will feature an original musical score by Ryan Book, who will accompany dancer Diana Turner-Forte in her composition inspired by the natural world. A backdrop to the piece will be a sequence of images by photographer Brady Beck projected on the wall above the pulpit — scenes of the natural world free from the hands of man.

Act Two, titled "The Siren of the Round Timber Tract," will be a dramatization of a story originally written by Ray Owen for *PineStraw*. Owen will portray the "Spirit of Turpentine," with actress Abigail Dowd portraying the "Siren." The part is based upon Helen Boyd Dull's historic ride into the virgin pines (known locally as round timber), where she encountered turpentiners bleeding the trees in the dying forest. Rod Brower and the Together-N-Unity Choir will provide

the musical accompaniment, with their soulful renderings of traditional African-American spirituals.

The third and final act, titled "Bleeding Pines of Turpentine," will feature an interpretive dance by Diana Turner-Forte, accompanied by a piece of music written and performed by Ryan Book. Projected overhead will be a series of images by photographer Frank Hunter showing the raw beauty of the surviving turpentine trees.

The event is co-sponsored by the Arts Council of Moore County and the Moore County Historical Association, in conjunction with Perry Davis/Davis Video Productions and Southern Pines Sister Cities, with all proceeds going toward funding future performances. **PS**



## Palustris Festival

What: Bleeding Pines of Turpentine  
 Date: Saturday, March 26  
 Time: 10-11:15 a.m. & 11:30-12:45 p.m.  
 Location: Old Bethesda Presbyterian Church  
 Cost: \$12 in advance/\$15 at the door  
 Presented By: Arts Council of Moore County, Moore County Historical Association, Bethesda Presbyterian Church  
 Phone: (910) 692-2787  
 More Info: [www.mooreart.org](http://www.mooreart.org) or [www.palustrisfestival.com](http://www.palustrisfestival.com)