

A presentation that looks at local opposition to slavery during the 1800s will kick off another season of an ongoing educational program offered at the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History. On Sunday at 2 p.m. the museum renews its spring season of History Talks, a program which brings historians and scholars from the surrounding area to Mount Airy to present and lead a discussion in their respective areas of expertise. Museum executive director Matt Edwards said Sunday will be a bit of a homecoming for the historian the museum will welcome. Douglas Porter Jr. is the downtown cultural resources director for the city of Raleigh, but is originally from Surry County. Porter earned his doctorate in history with an emphasis on the American South from the University of Mississippi, according to a statement regarding Sunday's program. His primary interest, however, is the Surry County area during the 1800s.

Porter's program, "Opposition to Slavery and Antislavery Efforts in the Surry County Area," will focus on how people from Grayson County, Virginia, to Guilford County opposed slavery both actively and passively. In his statement, Porter notes the program "will explore this fascinating, yet virtually forgotten, piece of local and regional history." Edwards said he believes the content of the talk should help the turnout on Sunday.

"There are always great crowds for our Civil War-themed programs," explained Edwards. "It's a theme which appeals to the local audience." The talks usually attract a crowd of 20 to 30 people, added Edwards. The museum director said he has high hopes for Sunday's program, as he believes weather may not play quite the role it has in past years in driving attendance. "The weather is always a question mark. People don't want to spend the first nice day of the spring inside," Edwards elaborated. "But we have had nice, pretty spring days all winter long." While the first of the three programs included in the spring months is set for Sunday, Edwards noted he is still working to organize the next two. He would like to tie the second two talks to the museum's visiting exhibit, Tiny Titans: Dinosaur Eggs & Babies.

He said he is looking forward to seeing how those programs are received, as the dinosaur exhibit has been well received by the surrounding community. The events are free to the public and take place on the second floor of the museum.