

Chatham County Historical Association

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Volume 29, Issue 3

CCHA Newsletter

Third Quarter, 2017

CCHA Quarterly Program “The Search for Jones Ferry Crossing”

Sunday, September 17, 2017, 2:00 PM
Historic Courthouse
Pittsboro, NC
Free and open to the public

Findings from two independent investigations dovetail to form a plausible theory about where Jones Ferry crossed the Haw River in the 18th and 19th centuries in northern Chatham County. Please join us at CCHA’s September program, where Margaret Miller Grove and Richard Ellington will co-present their observations to the community.

In his years-long search for the ferry crossing, Ellington, past president of the Chapel Hill Historical Society, has painstakingly documented the original path of Jones Ferry Road as it winds southwest from Carrboro toward the Haw. His research entailed many days of meticulously searching through original old county records in the NC Archives in Raleigh. Grove, meanwhile, was conducting her own search along the Haw riverbank for archeological evidence of the ferry operation itself, in the area where he suspected Jones Ferry Road might have terminated at a navigable crossing site. In 2003, she identified what she thought may be the ruins of a large building situated on bluffs above the river. The ruins lay alongside an old roadbed leading down from the terminus of today’s Jones Ferry Road.

When the two met, they realized that their theories support one another, and they are presenting them at this Chatham County Historical Association meeting.

About our speakers: Margaret Miller Grove is the Executive Director of The Tamassee Group, a newly-formed North Carolina non-profit that is dedicated to ecological



education, and to the conservation and preservation of significant natural and historical resources. Following 20 years serving the healthcare community nationally and internationally, Margaret has turned her attention to local efforts that foster wellbeing for the Earth and its inhabitants. She and her husband live near Pittsboro with their farm animals.

Richard Ellington is a local history “nut” with deep roots in Chatham County. His father’s family has lived here since the very early 1800s and they married into several other long-time area families (Cheeks, Coles, Browns, Clarks, Crutchfields and many more). He has done much and continues to do more extensive research into his families’ histories. He retired in 2011 from UNC-CH in the field of data processing after 43 years in different IT positions. Upon his retirement, he was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine for Outstanding and Meritorious Service to the State of North Carolina.



Revolutionary War Cannon Ball

Displayed in the Gallery Room 106, is a cannon ball of British manufacture from the Revolutionary War period. It has been documented as being from that time period. The cannon ball was found in Chatham County and given to CCHA by Mr. Dan Graham. A specially designed and constructed case made by Rouse Wilson houses the cannonball and provides proper display and protection. When you’re visiting the museum, please be sure to ask the docent to give you a tour of the gallery. See related article, p.2, “New Photo Gallery.”



CCHA Officers—2017

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9-11 Memorial Artifact Delivered to Historic Chatham County Courthouse

Men of the Chatham County 911 First Responder Memorial Foundation Corporation delivered a 9-11 artifact to the west hall of the courthouse on June 27, 2017. This artifact is intended to be "...a reminder to Chatham Citizens of those who daily place their lives on the line for the security and safety of others."

From the CCHA President

Over the past year, the Chatham County Historical Association (CCHA) has undertaken a project to disassemble and relocate the smokehouse from the "Kentucky" plantation of Frederick J. Hill to the new Agriculture and Conference Center just west of the Central Carolina Community College (CCCC) campus.



While there are no written records, the smokehouse appears to have been built around 1840 with hewn and sawn timbers of various types. Thanks to the leadership of Kenneth Crabtree and Lee Sullivan, and with the expert guidance of Jeff Gannon and Ray Carney, most of the structural framing has been completed and is stored at CCCC.

Jeff and CCCC have partnered to lead a popular college course in building preservation and restoration for students seeking to learn traditional methods for building structures. In the case of the smokehouse, students learned how to create mortise and tenon joints by matching the originals for timbers that were replaced. Jeff will lead a second class in September to finish assembling the structure on the new site and complete the exterior.

The preservation and protection of the historic structures of Chatham County is an important part of the mission of the CCHA. Many of our best historic buildings are simple houses and farm structures that are in danger of being lost forever. One such building is the Griffin-White House on East Street which is currently available for relocation and restoration through Preservation North Carolina. It is a remarkable building that is in the path of Chatham Park. Funds are available to assist with relocation expenses.

If you are interested in the preservation of historic structures please support the CCHA by becoming a member or making a contribution to the smokehouse project. Information is available on the CCHA website or by calling the CCHA office at 919-542-6222. Grimsley Hobbs

Coal Mine Presentation Well Received

When Forest Hazel stepped up to the podium for his presentation on the history of Coal Glen Mine (CCHA June Quarterly Program) and the coal industry in the area, that was the beginning of his command of the audience. His expression of cooperative research, documentation, and presentation all came together. CCHA is very grateful to Mr. Hazel for his research efforts and for an enlightening program.

CCHA has an audio recording in the office. If you would like to hear it, let us know so we can make it available.

If you have information that might aid his work, such as known descendants or oral stories handed down through families, please contact CCHA at its email of history@chathamhistory.org.

New Photo Gallery

Located in the Historic Courthouse across the hall from the CCHA office is room 106. At the request of the Collections Committee, the County Manager's Office gave CCHA permission to use the wall space for display of historical images from our collection. Our first display contains images of Pittsboro, Siler City, and the southeastern Chatham communities of Buckhorn, Merry Oaks, and Corinth. A number of original pictures are also on display. Stop by the gallery and view these historic photographs and paintings. Images in the gallery will be changed on an occasional basis. For a complete description of the display, see the CCHA website:



<http://chathamhistory.org/pdfs/TakeaPeekatGallery106.pdf>

CCHA Board reaches out to Community Groups

In an effort to make more Chatham residents and former residents aware of the historic data available through the Chatham County Historical Association, the Board and volunteers are reaching out to community groups in the county to inform them of the many historic artifacts and displays in the museum.

Delphine Womack, CCHA Board Member, hosted a table display of Horton memorabilia that identified community leaders from eastern Chatham that had made an impact on Horton School and the Pittsboro Community from the 1700's through the current time period. A few of those identified were George Moses Horton who the school is named after and Simon Green Atkins, educator and founder of Winston-Salem State University, who



was born and educated in Chatham. Others included Lewis Freeman who owned 16 lots in the town of Pittsboro in the 1800s. More recent individuals featured were Margaret Pollard, Chatham County Commissioner and community activist, and Lillie Freeman Rodgers, educator at Horton School for over 30 years. Other individuals included many Horton Alumni that had made an impact in the county and surrounding areas.

Mrs. Womack also spoke to the group and provided information about the Chatham County Historical Association and invited attendees to visit the display in the hotel lobby. She extended a special invitation to visit the museum on Sunday, August 20 from 1:00 -- 3:00 PM where a display of Horton High School memorabilia was on exhibition.

This was the sixteenth Horton High School Reunion celebrating the period 1935 through 1970. The North Chatham-Durham Chapter sponsored an "Icebreaker" on Thursday evening at the Chatham County Fairgrounds, Pittsboro, NC

The reunion continued on Friday and Saturday evenings at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel and Convention Center, Durham NC. The conclusion of the three-day event was a play featuring Horton students at the Horton Middle School in Pittsboro. Kathleen Herndon-Lee, Alumni President, greeted more than 270 Horton Alumni attending the events.

On Sunday, a number of Horton Alumni visited the museum before moving on to the conclusion of the reunion at Horton Middle School in Pittsboro.

Comer Publishes Research Volumes

Genealogist and researcher James Vann Comer has recently published a two-volume set of books containing material of interest to all doing genealogical and area research work in the counties of Lee, Chatham, Harnett and Moore. These volumes, *Central North Carolina Collection Volume 1 and 2 1985-2016* are drawn from his thirty years of researching this area.



We are pleased to be able to help promote our area history through his works. Additionally, he's been a member of CCHA since 1990 – almost as long as he has been researching and writing.

"My intention in this publication is to fairly represent the complete history of Central North Carolina by merging oral tradition, genealogical research and historical research. Too often genealogists and historians like to claim their famous ancestors yet set aside their less famous or infamous ancestors. Since the beginning of time people have struggled with many of the same problems we face today. Whether you find good or bad, remember they were just people just like you and me."

Visit the CCHA website <http://chathamhistory.org/pdfs/ComerPublishesCentralNorthCarolinaResearchVolumes.pdf> for more information and order form.

Herman Husband marker travels

Herman Husband's involvement with the War of the Regulation has been recognized for a long time by the state's highway marker program. However, the marker previously located south of Siler City near Love's Creek is no longer there. Through the efforts of Mr. Warren Dixon of Liberty the marker was more appropriately placed near Liberty. Read all about it in the complete article on our website. <http://chathamhistory.org/pdfs/HermanHusbandMarkerMovesWest.pdf>

World War I Marble Plaque finds New Home

“Pittsboro High School Honor Roll 1917-1918” is a plaque honoring the Veterans that attended school at PHS and served in World War I. It is made of a very rare marble, measuring 25.5” x 55.5” weighing several hundred pounds.

“Fifteen years after the war ended (ca 1922), the United Daughters of the Confederacy Winnie Davis Chapter #259, placed a plaque in the Pittsboro High School (at a cost of \$125), a large marble marker, bearing the names of those that served in World War I who had gone to this school.” The plaque includes names of 48 Army and 19 Navy Veterans that served in World War I.* The marker for many years could be seen on the wall in the lobby of the old Pittsboro High School located where the current Chatham Law Enforcement Center is located.

The facility was torn down in 1976 and the construction crew placed the plaque in the old gym that was turned into a maintenance building where it stayed until it was located by Archie Hackney and presented to Chatham County Historical Association in 1998 on behalf of the VFW.

The marker was subsequently mounted in the conference room of the courthouse. There it remained until the fire in 2010. It was moved to the Chatham Mills facility with other rescued items and subsequently to Sanford Road storage for safe keeping until an ideal location could be found.

In July, 2017, again with the assistance of Archie Hackney, the marker was presented to the Joe Wagner VFW Post in Pittsboro where plans are to again have the marker on display.

The Siler City Monument Company evaluated the plaque and found that it was made of a very precious and expensive type of marble and not suitable to be displayed in the weather. Therefore, the VFW Post plans to have it installed on the wall of the VFW Building.



The Chatham County Historical Association is delighted that after a long road, the plaque will have a permanent and appropriate home again.

Special appreciation to Archie Hackney for his efforts to move the heavy object and get the plaque an appropriate home.

*Source: *Chapter Histories North Carolina Division United Daughters of the Confederacy 1897-1947.*

CCHA Museum Report

The museum and volunteers had a very busy summer. Museum volunteers provided historical activities for several Summer Camps including the 4H at Chatham Northwest District Park, and the Sheriff’s Camp and Primrose Camp which came to the Museum. The campers enjoyed the artifacts and history of Chatham.

Pittsboro First Sundays were great days for the Museum to be open this

summer so visitors could come in out of the heat and learn about the history of Chatham County. The Museum had over a hundred visitors each First Sunday. Visitors who came back every month got to see different temporary exhibits in addition to the Museum. Temporary exhibits included *HealthCare in Chatham County*, the *Smokehouse*, and *Horton School*.

The Fourth Grade Field Trip volunteers are ramping up for our first Field Trip of the 2017-2018 school year on September 21st with Chatham Charter School. This school year we will have 16 Field Trips that will educate every Chatham County public, private and charter school fourth grader. Every field trip takes 10-12 volunteers. We all feel very fortunate to have this opportunity to teach students about Chatham history.

The museum committee is working on walking tour maps for the County’s three incorporated towns, so stayed tuned!

Opportunities to view Chatham history on-line:

YouTube: *Siler City Murals*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suis8v3epz8>



Support the CCHA—join today