

Research Articles about Chatham County



The articles in this annotated list were prepared by CCHA volunteers and are grouped by topic. Some of the articles are extensive—others are brief. All offer something of interest about Chatham County history. Each item on the list links to the full article.

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Geography and Settlement



[Granville Land Grants in Chatham County](#)

Some of the earliest landholders in Chatham County obtained their lands through grants from the Granville land office between 1751 and 1763. This article attempts to identify which of the grants made in Chatham's parent county, Orange, were for land in Chatham County by using references to waterways. CCHA volunteer Jim Wiggins produced a list of some 202 grants that he believes are probably for land in what is now Chatham. Along with the grantholder's name, he provides the survey and grant dates, number of acres granted, waterways and other geographic features mentioned in the survey, adjoining landholders mentioned in the survey, a map code that allows users to locate the waterway by USGS map segments, and page references to his sources.



[Waterways of Chatham County](#)

Provides a map and list identifying waterways in Chatham County compiled from old deeds and maps by CCHA volunteer Jim Wiggins. Earliest land records date from colonial times, when Chatham was part of Orange County, and identify a property first as "on waters of" a named stream or river, and often went on to name smaller waterways, such as branches, forks, and prongs, in defining the boundary lines of the property. Over time, some of the names have changed, but this article can help locate property on present-day maps.

Politics and Military

[Tribute to a Chatham Patriot—James Emerson](#)

Records remarks and a slide show of photographs taken on May 1, 2011, at the Old Tick Creek burial grounds in Chatham County, to honor the memory of James Emerson, one of twelve Regulators captured at the battle of Alamance on the 16th of May, 1771--a battle in which the settlers in the backcountry of the North Carolina piedmont were considered in governor Tryon's own words to be in "a state of war and rebellion."



[Whigs Restored Two Party Rule to Chatham and North Carolina](#)

Documents early 19th century politics in North Carolina and Chatham County. The roles of Chathamites Abraham Rencher and Charles Manley are described.



[Chatham County and the Politics of Secession, 1854-1861](#)

Documents the political events that eventually took North Carolina out of the Union and into the Confederacy, with a particular focus on information about Chatham County's involvement in these events. Identifies the views and votes of Chatham citizens and their political representatives regarding slavery and secession.

[John Randolph Lane and the Chatham Boys](#)

Fred Vatter's account of the life and lessons of John Randolph Lane, who enlisted as a private in the Chatham Boys or Chatham Grays, which later became Company G of the 26th North Carolina Regiment. In July 1863, the 26th found itself at Gettysburg, facing the dreaded Iron Brigade of the Army of the Potomac. Vatter describes the Gettysburg battles, during which most of the men of the 26th were killed and Col. Lane was severely wounded. After the war Lane met and became friends with Charles McConnell of Chicago, who was the sniper who wounded him.

[Chatham County, A Hotbed of Populism](#)

Describes Chatham County's leadership role in the Populist movement of the 1890s and on the political debates of that decade as described in several Chatham newspapers. It identifies dozens of Chatham citizens who participated in the politics of the day.

[Veterans' Memorials, Chatham County](#)

Photos and brief descriptions of the West Chatham Veterans Memorial and the Goldston Veterans Memorial.

[Chatham County ~ World War One](#)

Several articles on our website provide information about the WWI experience in Chatham County. Topics include the WWI draft and lotteries, exemptions, service records, and genealogical resources.

Architecture, Communities, and Landmarks

[Weekend Historical Tour Offers View of One Dozen Siler City Locations](#)

Reprint of an article by Milburn Gibbs that appeared in the Thursday, September 23, 2004, *Chatham New/Record*, 13-A. The article describes the CCHA-organized tour, which opened twelve Siler City historic locations to the public: 1. Braxton School and Gym, 2. Farmers Alliance Store, 3. Chatham Bank, 4. The Hardware Store, 5. Quality Motors, 5a. Justice Chevrolet, 6. City Hall, 7. First Baptist Church, 8. Matthews-Wren House, 9. Snipes-Fox House, 10. Corinth Church, Chatham High School, 11. Walter Siler House, 12. Gregson-Hadley House. Photographs included.



[St. Lawrence House “The Yellow House” 2016 Update](#)



Tells what has happened to the historic St. Lawrence House in Pittsboro since it was purchased by Ray and Janet Carney in 2012. Describes some of the renovations the Carneys have undertaken and discoveries about the house and its history that they have made.

[Three Historic Chatham County Houses: Parts I and II – Patrick St. Lawrence or Yellow House](#)

Parts 1 and 2 of a five-part series by Jane Pyle, written in 2006, that describes three historic Chatham County houses. Part I describes the Patrick St. Lawrence House—also called the Yellow House and Part II gives a brief background on Patrick St. Lawrence himself.

[Three Historic Chatham County Houses: Part III – McClenahan House](#)



Part 3 of a five-part series by Jane Pyle, written in 2006, that describes three historic Chatham County houses. Part III provides the history of the McClenahan House.

[Three Historic Chatham County Houses: Parts IV and V – Taylor House and Taylor Family](#)

Parts 4 and 5 of a five-part series by Jane Pyle, written in 2006, that describes three historic Chatham County houses. Parts IV and V the Taylor House and Taylor family.

[Alvin Bynum House](#)

Photograph and brief note about the Alvin Bynum House in Pittsboro.



[CCHA Documents History of Property for New County Agricultural Center and Saves Unique Smokehouse](#)

Describes the history of the property on which the new Chatham County Agricultural Center was built in 2016, and an architectural survey of the property prior to construction. The report highlights an intact smokehouse found on the property which was saved by CCHA.

[The Day Chicken Bridge Got Its Name](#)

Barbara Pugh describes an incident in the early 1950s in which a Chatham County bridge collapsed as a chicken truck was crossing, and the subsequent history of the bridge.

[A Brief History of the Schools of Chatham County](#)

Describes the history of education in Chatham County from approximately 1771 to 1971—beginning with early academies and public schools; consolidation of the 1920s, which eliminated many one-room schoolhouses in favor of larger schools; and post WWII growth and integration. Some photos.



[Virginia Man Finds Chatham Info in Old Book](#)

A reference to Riggsbee, a community in northern Chatham near what is now Briar Chapel, is discovered in an old book, which also had a bookplate for “The Farmer’s Library Agriculture, Science, and the Arts”—incorporated in Chatham County in 1833 and probably one of the earliest library associations in the state. Inked on the back endpaper of the book are the birth dates for Hasten Poe, his wife and children. The Ivey family of Chatham is also mentioned.



[Ceremony Celebrates Martha's Chapel](#)

Describes a 2011 ceremony in which a historic marker was dedicated at Martha’s Chapel by the Sir Humphrey Gilbert Chapter Colonial Dames XVII Century. Gives a brief history of Martha’s Chapel and James O’Kelly, founder of the Christian Church.

[Mason's Came to Pittsboro Early](#)

Fred Vatter’s delightful account of the Masonic apron in CCHA’s collection and Masonry in Chatham County.

Industry and Commerce

[Chatham’s Role in Early Railroads](#)

A brief excerpt about the first public meeting to discuss bringing rail transportation to North Carolina. The meeting was held at the residence of William Albright in Chatham.



[Prosperity Came to Pittsboro on the Train](#)

Discusses the impact of poor roads on Pittsboro’s economy and the effect of transportation improvements such as the Cape Fear and Deep River Navigation Company, the Western Railroad, and the Pittsboro Railroad Company. The arrival of the railroad opened a period of prosperity and building in Pittsboro. A notable example is the arrival of Bennet Nooe, Jr., a Lexington manufacturer of shuttle blocks for the textile trade. Includes a map which shows old homes and structures in and around Pittsboro during the period of 1787-1900.



[The Oval Oak Washboard](#)

A brief history about the Oval Oak Washboard in CCHA's collection and the Chatham Manufacturing Company that produced it.

Chatham People

[Simon Green Atkins](#)

Describes the dedication of a marker honoring the achievements of Simon Green Atkins in Haywood, Chatham County, on June 11, 2005, the 142nd anniversary of his birth. The marker is placed near the historical location of the school where Atkins received his early education and began his teaching career in 1884. Also included are photographs of the marker and celebration, as well as a brief biography of Atkins, who was the founder and first president of Winston-Salem State University. Atkins was born in 1863 in Haywood. His parents were farmers and former slaves.



[Black Chathamites – Making a Difference](#)

Brief biographical sketches of eighteen black Chatham residents. All of the individuals described were either born in Chatham, received their education in the county, or lived later in life in Chatham. Included are Simon Green Atkins; Louis Edgar Bland; Mildred Edna Cotton Council; Margie Horton Ellison; Lewis Freeman; George Moses Horton; Gatha Horton Lassiter; Benjamin Joseph Lee; Dr. Mansel Philip McCleave; Walter Alston McLaughlin, Sr.; Margaret Bryant Pollard; Richard R. Ramsey, Sr.; J.R. Richardson; Jeanette French Richardson; Roxie A. Small; Jessie Walker Rodgers; Lillie Freeman Rogers; and Isaiah Eugene Taylor, Sr.

[Herman Husband \[Marker\] Moves West](#)

Describes why a Highway Historical Marker noting Herman Husband's contributions to the Regulator Movement was moved from Chatham County to Randolph County. Includes links to the research by Warren Dixon that instigated this move and to additional information on Herman Husband.