

# Exhibits Archive

Past exhibits -- no longer on display.



## **Honoring Chatham Places of Worship**

Temporary Exhibit up April-July 2019

This exhibit displays photographs of many of Chatham County's places of worship, along with quotations and facts regarding church and worship in the county over its history.

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## Crossing Racial Lines: Tod R. Edwards 1875-1951



The exhibit on display in the Chatham Historical Museum for the months of Jan-Mar 2019, celebrated the story of the Tod R. Edwards family of Siler City. This African-American family ran a very successful jewelry store in the otherwise all-white business district of Siler City from 1905 until 1961. As Wade Hadley noted in his history, *The Town of Siler City: 1887-1987*, this was a “notable achievement for a

Negro family during that period in this area.”

Indeed, such a success story would be remarkable for any family, but Tod Edwards’ story is full of interesting details and a bold crossing of racial lines. A native of Chatham, Edwards moved from Bynum to Siler City, where he opened a barber shop and dabbled in repairing watches, clocks and bicycles—being largely self-taught and making his own tools. In 1905 he had accumulated enough cash—he didn’t hold with borrowing—to construct a brick building on South Chatham Avenue, where he and his family operated the leading and largest jewelry store in Chatham County for over 50 years. He operated a photographic studio in the rear of his store which also did a large volume of business.

Patrons of the Edwards Jewelry Store were mostly white—at a time when segregation was unquestioned and race relations governed by Jim Crow laws and entrenched attitudes of White Supremacy. Edwards’ own gentility appeared to engender a large measure of civility, and some degree of respect among much of the white community.



Friends and members of the Edwards family have loaned the Museum artifacts to help tell the family’s story. Admission to the Museum is free and the Museum is open every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 11:00am until 4:00pm, weather permitting.

[Read more](#) about the Tod R. Edwards family.

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## Pearl Harbor – William Teasdale Durham – USS Arizona Casualty



On 7 December, 1941, Pearl Harbor was attacked. Among the hundreds of casualties was William Teasdale Durham, of Chatham County. Born 25 April 1919 to Edward Watson and Jennie Florence Herndon Durham, he enlisted in the US Navy on 5 March 1940 and reported aboard the USS Arizona on 30 September 1940.

William's remains were identified from his Pittsboro High School ring, which is among other artifacts recently donated to the Chatham

County Historical Association by his family. Some of these items were display at the Museum during the month of December 2018.

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## Chatham County's WWI Experience



Our November 2018 exhibit honored the service and sacrifice of Chatham's WWI veterans.

The front pages of any US newspaper printed during WWI would give you the big stories on war news—troop movements and battle outcomes. Chatham's local papers of the day—*The Chatham Record* and *Siler City Grit* were no different. Their front-page headlines picked up the same national stories.

But of much more interest to the folks of Chatham were the local stories. It is pages two and three of the *Record* and *Grit* that preserve the historical record of Chatham County's unique experience of the war.

This exhibit used excerpts from the local pages of the *Record* and *Grit* to illustrate the experiences of Chatham's WWI soldiers and those who contributed to the war effort from home.

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## Chatham Places Old and New



Familiar places and other's you've probably never heard of—all on a current Chatham map—along with postmarks from former Chatham places.

Discover places like Pluck, Waldo, Griffin's Crossroads, Riggsbee and more—all a part of Chatham's history. Share what you know about places whose locations we've not learned.

On exhibit June-Oct 2018.

An exhibit in the display case highlighted new acquisitions in the CCHA collection.

Come spend a few hours exploring the museum this summer! We'll keep the air conditioning on for you!





## Pittsboro High School 1923-1970

Class photos, band, clubs, athletic teams and more – covering much of Pittsboro High School's 47-year lifespan. Don't miss this great collection of photos and memorabilia! This display was up April through June 2018.

Additional PHS items were on display in the mobile display case in the museum.



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## Chatham County Fair...from the beginning



Artifacts from Chatham County's unique and long-lived county fair—which began as the Chatham County Colored Agricultural Fair—are the focus of this display. See photos, programs, news clippings, ribbons, and other memorabilia from this event, which is a testament to the talents and strengths of Chatham County's black community. Exhibited March 2018.

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## The Battle of Alamance

This exhibit recounts the history of the Battle of Alamance -- considered by some historians to be the first battle of the Revolutionary War. The Battle took place May 16, 1771, between the North Carolina Provincial Militia and the North Carolina Regulators. The Regulators were ordinary backcountry citizens—many of whom lived in what would become Chatham County. They believed citizens should regulate the government, and turned to armed rebellion after their petitions for relief from grievances imposed by corrupt officials failed. Governor Tryon's position was the Regulators were in rebellion against their King, country, and laws. The Regulators were defeated in the battle and Governor Tryon took twelve prisoners—six of whom were later hung and six pardoned. For more about James Emerson, a Chatham patriot who was among the pardoned prisoners, [click here](#).



Exhibited most of 2017.



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## Veterans' Day 2017: Honor and Be Inspired



Inspiring quotes by and about veterans. Exhibit on display for the month of November only.

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## Harvest History



Our September-October 2017 display highlights various aspects of Chatham's rich and diverse agricultural history. From plantations to sharecropping and from cornshuckings to harvest parades, you'll find an interesting collection of fall facts and recollections.

Our thanks to the following sources of information for this exhibit: NC Cooperative Extension, Library of Congress Farm Security Administration, Raleigh N&O *Past Times*, and the Chatham Community Library.

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## Only the Smokehouse Remains



Our June-August 2017 exhibit, Only the Smokehouse Remains, displayed photos of CCHA's project to restore the 1850s era smokehouse discovered on the Frederick Jones Hill estate when preparations were being made to construct the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center on that property.

CCHA rescued the structure from the construction site and has undertaken a restoration project that will ultimately return the restored smokehouse to the

Ag Center property where it will serve as an educational feature and reminder of Chatham's long agricultural heritage.

In the early spring of 2017, CCHA partnered with Central Carolina Community College to offer a class in historic restoration techniques. Students in the class devoted 16 Saturdays to constructing replacements for damaged parts of the structure. A foundation has been constructed on the Ag Center site in preparation for reassembly of the structure on-site in coming months.

CCHA is grateful for the community interest in the project and for the financial contributions received from community businesses, organizations, and individuals to date. We offer special thanks for generous financial and in-kind donations from the James Milton Johnson & Laura Blair Johnson Trust, North Carolina Farm Bureau, Earl Thomas Grading, and Chandler Concrete of Pittsboro which have funded much of our progress to date.

We need your help! Donations of any amount will help us return the smokehouse to the property where it stood for more than 150 years. Donations of \$100 or more will be recognized on a plaque to be installed on or near the smokehouse when it is restored.

[Learn more about how you can help.](#)

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## Honoring the History of Health



Honoring the History of Health, our April-May 2017 exhibit, highlighted the contributions of a number of Chatham County physicians, pharmacists, and North Carolina's first organic farmer. From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, from Gulf to Pittsboro, Egypt to Siler City, these Chatham healers used the potions and practices of their times to treat the ailments of their neighbors. The exhibit also included a display of early medical artifacts.

CCHA is grateful to the following for their contributions to this exhibit: S&T Soda Shoppe, Pittsboro; JR Moore & Son, Gulf; Cecilia Budd Grimes, Siler City; Chatham County Libraries.

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## African Americans in Chatham County History



This display highlighted the lives of eight Chatham County African Americans who contributed in various ways to the county's rich history from the 1700s to the present. Learn about Lewis Freeman, an early and successful free black settler in Pittsboro; Mildred Edna Cotton Council of Mama Dip's Kitchen in Chapel Hill; John Chavis, "Missionary to the Slaves;" Alexander Scarborough, a slave who served as sexton of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church; Gatha Horton Lassiter, "Conscience of the Community;" as well as Benjamin

Joseph Lee; J.R. Richardson; and Simon Green Atkins. Their stories are part of the tapestry of Chatham County's history. Exhibited in February and March 2017.

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## Goin' Home, Goin' Home



This display highlighted a few of the African-American Funeral Programs in CCHA's collection. These programs represent a rich tradition in the black community and a valuable resource for those interested in family histories. Written by and about African Americans, the obituaries provide an important source of local history about African Americans in Chatham County, highlighting religious, occupational and educational affiliations, as well as personal traits that loved-ones noted about the deceased. Exhibited 2016.

[Click here](#) for more about the Funeral Program collection.