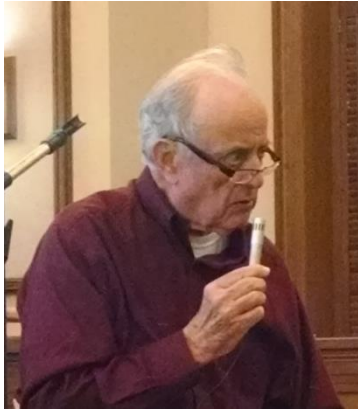


# Gene Brooks Recognized for Contributions to Chatham County History



Local historian Gene Brooks was presented with a plaque recognizing his vital role in reactivating the Chatham County Historical Association in 1988, as well as his generosity in sharing his love of history with the community. The plaque was awarded at the conclusion of Brooks' second presentation about the Revolutionary War in North Carolina. The Chatham County Historical Association sponsored programs were held on January 28 and February 11, 2018. At both programs Brooks educated and entertained a packed courtroom of interested "students."

Brooks is a respected local historian whose profession was and avocation continues to be history. A native Chathamite, Brooks taught history at Pittsboro High School and Northwood High School for thirty years. He also served on Pittsboro's Town Board for thirty years. His community work has included teaching GED classes at Central Carolina Community College as well as teaching his Sunday school class. His expertise has been recognized by several generations of Chatham citizens, and he has been called by his many admirers the "dean of Chatham County history."

Brooks is a long-time supporter of the Chatham County Historical Association, which he helped to reactivate in 1988, after the group experienced a few years of low activity. He served as president for several years and has continued to contribute to the organization and to promote Chatham



*A full courtroom enjoying Brooks' second presentation -- 11 Feb 2018.  
Photos by Kim Cotten-West.*

history by presenting programs, advising on the North Carolina and local history collections at the Chatham Community Library, and encouraging others to become involved.

At the January 28 program, Brooks outlined conditions in North Carolina and Chatham County leading up to and in the early years of the Revolutionary War. He observed that residents of the state were divided in their loyalties—with about a third loyal to the Crown, a third favoring independence, and another third just hoping to survive the conflict—so that the war in this area was largely a civil war. Brooks noted that a skirmish

at Moore's Bridge in North Carolina disheartened the British and probably factored into their decision to concentrate their troops in the north, where most of the early battles of the war subsequently took place.

On February 11, Brooks focused on the Southern Campaign and a number of incidents that took place in North Carolina once troops and fighting moved south. A number of those incidents involved Chatham County locations familiar to the large audience. Brooks noted that fighting in this area was mostly guerrilla warfare. His thesis is that the events that took place in Chatham certainly influenced the outcome of the war.

Brooks' presentations comprised the first two of three educational programs sponsored by the historical association on the Revolutionary War in North Carolina. The speaker at the third program, held on Sunday, February 25, was Dr. Carole Troxler, professor emerita at Elon University, whose topic was The Regulator Movement in the North Carolina Backcountry.