

CCHA Receives Broyles Collection of Native American Artifacts

Charles Broyles and his wife, Edith Philpott Broyles, moved to Chatham County in 1950. They were natives of Kentucky and Tennessee and interested in continuing the farming tradition in which they were raised. They settled on a 150 acre farm in the Hanks Chapel area of the county. Mr. Broyles had collected Native American artifacts while in Tennessee and, in the course of cultivating their Chatham County farm, he unearthed many more. Eventually, he put many of them into a display in their home, where he welcomed school groups and others to view them. The artifacts were kept by their son, Charles, Jr., until his death in 2016, when they were sent to Edith's relatives in Tennessee. Last July, Stephen Philpott donated the collection to the Chatham County Historical Association.

Since then, members of CCHA have worked with Paul Webb, a local archeologist, to sort through the artifacts to determine their significance to the history of Chatham County. Stephen Davis, from the Research Laboratories of Archeology at UNC Chapel Hill, also examined the collection to assess the types and origins of the pieces in the collection. They determined that some of the collection may have been collected by Mr. Broyles in Tennessee, as some pieces were of material indigenous to that area. Many, however, were of local origin and reflected a good range of the types of arrowheads, axes, and other tools that were probably used in these parts. The items ranged from completely finished pieces to others that were still in the process of being fashioned.

CCHA plans to make the collection available for its educational and exhibition programs, engaging students and visitors in thinking about and speculating about how the various artifacts might have been made or used.

The collection is still being sorted and made ready for permanent storage and CCHA hopes to have a selection of the artifacts available for public viewing and education programs in the near future. We are especially grateful to Stephen Philpott for donating these materials to the Association and adding this dimension to the long and fascinating history of Chatham County.



Paul Webb and Stephen Davis examining the Broyles collection