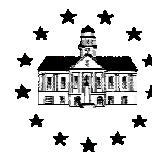


# CCHA Newsletter



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First Quarter 2011

## ONLINE GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH DATABASES NOW AVAILABLE TO CHATHAM RESEARCHERS

Ancestry Library Edition and a special African-American Heritage program are now available to library patrons thanks to a generous gift from the James Milton Johnson and Laura Muse Blair Johnson Trust. Both databases are available at all three branches of Chatham County Public Libraries, and African American Heritage is also available to library patrons through the internet. Chatham County library patrons already had access to HeritageQuest through NC LIVE.

The Ancestry collection provides easy access to more than 6,000 genealogy databases, including census, vital, church, court, and immigration records. Coverage focuses primarily on the United States and the United Kingdom, though collections from some other countries are included. Notable collections include US Federal Census images and indexes (1790-1930), Daughters of the American Revolution Lineage Books, Social Security Death Index (updated monthly), WWI Draft Registration Cards, Federal Slave Narratives, and a strong Civil War collection. Users also have access to a variety of historical

maps and photographs. This collection updates continually, with resources added daily. Chatham County library patrons can access the Ancestry database at any Chatham County Public Library branch. Visitors can use the database via one of the two dedicated local history genealogy computers in the Chatham Community Library.

African American Heritage may be accessed at all Chatham library branches and offsite through the internet. It provides access to a comprehensive mix of resources, records, and tools exclusively devoted to African-American family history research. The collection includes primary sources such as census, vital, church, legal, and freedman and slave records. The newest primary source collections include North Carolina cohabitation records and marriage records, US Colored Troops Records (1861-1865) and registers of slaves and free persons of color from select states and counties. Offsite access to the African American Heritage database is available to library patrons by calling the Chatham Community Library Reference Desk at 919-545-8086 to obtain login information.

## THE CHATHAM HISTORICAL MUSEUM YEAR-END REVIEW

Jane Pyle

Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how was the play? The first newsletter of 2010 reported a new exhibit about Chatham People, ending prophetically, "The exhibit will be on display through March..." and at least part of it was still on the wall when volunteers emptied the contents of the room on March 28, retrieving about 75% of the collection with little or no permanent damage and only about 3% of it beyond salvage.

With the generous offer by Elizabeth Anderson for the use of her conference room for a temporary museum site, the "Chatham People" exhibit was expanded in the interim space to "Chatham Faces and Places" by Patty Walters. Soon on display was a recently-acquired quilt donated by Laverne Davis that had escaped the fire,

and future topical exhibits were planned to coincide with CCHA programs. Publications retrieved from the museum were transferred to the museum for sale at reduced prices and new stock was brought out from storage. The Chatham Historical Museum was back in business at 184 East Street, Pittsboro, at the same time as before the disaster: Wednesdays, noon to 3 p.m. and other times by appointment.

Following a short drying-out period in space made available by Tom Roberts of Chatham Mills, the museum collection was sorted and transferred to rented storage while items were inventoried and assessed for retention, repair, and protection. With widespread public support, the Chatham County Commissioners announced their

(Continued on page 5)

## FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month was started in 1926 by Carter G. Woodson, with the goal of educating people about African-American cultural backgrounds and achievements.

## MANLY LAW OFFICE WINDOWS

The windows in the Manly Law Office building are being restored with the help of the *Chatham Questers*. Janet Doppler is managing the project for the *Questers*. They have hired a restoration specialist, Al Poland, of Apex. Mr. Poland estimates that the work will take him approximately six months, and he estimated the cost to be about \$500 per window. The *Questers* have funds on hand for the first two (2) windows. They will seek a grant from their parent organization and have a fundraiser to complete the project.

Mr. Poland started the project in October but has been delayed by the cold winter weather. He began replacing the 1<sup>st</sup> window on January 31 and states that the work should proceed much quicker from this point forward. The sashes were completely disassembled, cleaned, re-glued and put-tied. He is planning to repaint the sashes and trim and adjust the shutters. The restored sashes look very good. Stop by and take a look.

## CHATHAM SLAVE NARRATIVES FROM THE FEDERAL WRITERS PROJECT ON WEBSITE

During the years 1936 to 1938, former slaves then living in seventeen states were interviewed regarding their recollections about their lives as slaves. Some of those interviewed had lived in Chatham County. A research article written by Beverly and Jim Wiggins will be on our CCHA website so that you may readily link to this information and pictures on twelve slave narratives identified with Chatham connections.

## CCHA DUES

Please do not forget your dues are due. Your dues are the most significant part of the revenue CCHA needs to keep going. We need you!

## MUSEUM RECEIVES CHAVIS BIOGRAPHY

By: Jane Pyle

A biography of John Chavis, early 19<sup>th</sup>-century educator and minister, was presented to the Chatham Historical Museum in honor of the services rendered to the county by Ruth Horton, Pittsboro native.

The 60-page biography, subtitled *A Remarkable Negro who Conducted a School in North Carolina for White Boys and Girls*, was written by The Rev. G. C. Shaw and published in 1931.

Chavis, born free, lived from 1763 to 1838. He studied at Princeton College and was licensed to preach by the Presbyterian church. Missionary, schoolmaster, and tutor, he taught both white and black children in Granville, Wake, and Chatham counties, among them Chatham-born Charles Manly, Governor of North Carolina in mid-century. In 1831, Chavis's career was cut short when the state legislature ruled that no Negro be allowed to preach or teach African-Americans, although he continued to conduct his school.



Martha Hope Smith looks on as Ruth Horton reviews the book in the interim Chatham Historical Museum with Jane Pyle, curator.

Ruth [Waddell] Horton was born in Randolph County but moved with her family to Chatham County at an early age. She graduated from Horton High School, attended St. James Mission, and is now a member of St. Bartholomew's Church. She worked at the poultry plant for 20 before working as a homemaker in the Chatham County Department of Social Services, retiring about 2005. "Everybody loved you," said Vicki Alston, a co-worker, "both the clients and the staff."

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - BARBARA CLARK PUGH A YEAR FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS

The Courthouse fire on March 25, 2010 was the influence for the activities for the association for most of the year. It soon became apparent to us that we were living a new chapter in the history of the courthouse. There were written stories to save; there were oral stories to save; there were photographic stories to save; there were media stories to save; and there were stories from the past to bring forward.

As the year progressed, the future of the Courthouse became clearer and by year's end, the decision had been made by County Commissioners to have first floor space dedicated to museums for the people of Chatham.

Feeling very displaced from our "home," rented storage space for our historical collection and a temporary museum and office space worked well as we had to find space to replace what had been lost. Having secured our belongings, our thoughts returned to our customary duties. During the year, we continued to have museum hours, to have educational programs and newsletters, to maintain the website, to search and report on cemeteries, to sell publications, to have presence at public events, to be involved with the local history and genealogy section of the Chatham Community Library, and to let folks know

that we were well.

Our accomplishments during the year were driven by the support of members and friends. Some gave time and work, while others provided financial assistance. Both are valued and appreciated.

For many years Edith Calhoun served the association as secretary and was very deeply involved in bringing the Chatham Community Library into being. Mid-year Edith requested we name another person for the Secretary as she needed to step aside for health reasons. We were fortunate to add Jane Hinnant to the Board as secretary. Edith passed away on January 13, 2011 and we all miss her.

Come join us for our annual meeting and program on March 6, 2011. You need to meet the new directors who will be voted on. We appreciate the past work of Bill Dow and Barbara Perry during their times on the board. The new directors Mary Nettles and Cecil Wilson will bring with them their perspectives on accomplishing the goals of the association.

Planning work for the new Courthouse museum has been going on through committee work since November. We are about to "go public" with some early plans and start a fundraising campaign. So, for 2011 and 2012, ***let's build a museum!***

## BEGINNING OF NEW MUSEUM SPACE IN HISTORIC COURTHOUSE

Members of CCHA and Hobbs Architects and Design Dimension examine space in the Courthouse as planning begins. The Commissioners approved the next phase of the reconstruction project. This approved phase included designated spaces to be used by the CCHA for museum, display areas, and supporting space. Expected oc-

cupancy date Fall of 2012.

The new museum will be located in the northeast quadrant with additional display areas on the walls in the corridors; the southwest quadrant is designated for office space, work and storage areas. The Board has asked Susan Little to chair the Exhibits Committee.

(photo by Robert Little)



## CHATHAM BOARD MOVES AHEAD WITH HISTORIC COURTHOUSE AND JUDICIAL CENTER

At its meeting on February 7, the Chatham County Board of Commissioners took several actions related to next steps for reconstruction of the Chatham County Historic Courthouse, including approval of general floor plans, project schedule, and primary construction materials for the rebuilt courthouse. The board also made several decisions related to the new Judicial Center.

The Board of Commissioners approved the preliminary plans submitted by Hobbs Architects PA, with a few suggested changes. The building schedule means construction is expected to begin in September 2011 with completion 12 months

yet been developed, but the design team welcomed input from the commissioners on such issues as updated technology and teleconferencing equipment. The commissioners discussed the potential need for a "warming" kitchen somewhere on the first floor to make it easier to use the courtroom or other areas for public events. They asked Hobbs to see if this is a viable option and to recommend a location.



**THE YELLOW HOUSE**

later. Final drawings would be finalized by June and the request for bids from contractors submitted this summer.

"The exterior will be the Historic Courthouse we knew and loved before the fire," said Taylor Hobbs, project architect. Most interior design features also will remain the same, including wood paneling and trim. However, some materials may be changed to better reflect the building's origins, such as replacing the tile flooring on the first floor with brick pavers. Hobbs said his firm had met with all parties that would be moved into the courthouse, including representatives of Superior Court, the Chatham County Historical Association, and the Pittsboro-Siler City Convention Visitors Bureau. "We interviewed each group at length about their space and facility needs."

In sharing a general floor plan concept, Hobbs noted many of the details have not



**THE TAYLOR HOUSE**

Related to construction of the new County Judicial Center, the board approved moving ahead with completing courtroom space and offices on the second floor during initial construction that was going to be left unfinished for future growth. Estimates show that it will be a substantial savings to complete these facilities during initial construction.

The commissioners also approved a contract with Blake House Moving Company, Inc. to move three historically sig-

nificant houses in Pittsboro located on land needed to build the new Judicial Center. Moving the houses to other lots in Pittsboro's Historic District was a requirement



**THE MCCLENAHAN HOUSE**

of a loan from US Department of Agriculture used to fund the Judicial Center.

Once moved to lots in the Historic District, the homes will be listed for sale. County Manager Charlie Horne noted that extensive efforts had been made to find people willing to accept the homes but who would pay the moving costs. However, the USDA's requirement that the homes be moved to lots inside the Historic District created restrictions that interested parties could not meet. "There are very few lot options available in the Historic District," Horne said.

# CCHA

## NEW CCHA DIRECTOR CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHIES

The Director elections at the next Annual Meeting will feature three new faces:

**Mary Nettles** can list many years of public service to the citizens of Chatham County. A Chatham native, Mary has retired after 30 years of employment with UNC Health Care in Chapel Hill. Along with her regular schedule of work, she spent countless hours involved in serving the needs of citizens of the county. Additionally, she is currently the President of Chatham County community NAACP Branch #5377. She has been involved with the Chatham County Democratic Party serving as its Chair for six years and Vice-

Chair for four. She has been aggressively involved in Democratic Party activities at the local, district, state, and national levels, and was a North Carolina delegate to Gore/Lieberman, Kerry/Edwards and Obama/Biden Democratic National Conventions. Mary's involvement with the Democratic Party began in the 1960s as she accompanied her mother and father at fundraising and victory parties all over Chatham.

**Jane Hinnant** accepted appointment as CCHA Secretary this past summer. She is a welcomed addition to the Board and brings lots of energy, humor, and a willing-

*(Continued on page 5)*

## IMPROVEMENTS TO LIBRARY LOCAL HISTORY AND GENEALOGY RESOURCES CONTINUE

Beverly Wiggins, CCHA Library Committee

A lot of behind-the-scenes work is going on to expand and preserve the resources available at the new Chatham Community Library (CCL) to researchers interested in Chatham County history and families. Although the CCL opened less than six short months ago, already much has been accomplished. CCHA has been pleased to support these efforts.

Here's a sampling. Take advantage of these great resources, make contributions of your own, and stay tuned for more to come.

- The Chatham Community Library reference staff has moved a number of books from the larger library collection to the local history genealogy (LHG) collection where they will be more easily accessible to researchers. Those items have been re-cataloged and are currently on the shelves.
- The CCL reference staff has identified soft-cover publications in the LHG collection that they believe should be bound for permanence, and the CCHA board has approved funding of \$1,000 to cover the binding of existing items and soft-cover items added to the collection in the future.
- CCHA has funded a subscription to the North Carolina Historical Review for the Chatham Community Library. Some back issues of the journal are also available at the Wren Memorial Library in Siler City.
- Approximately thirty Northwood yearbooks donated to CCHA, covering most years between 1975 and 2007 will be made available to the public via inclusion in the LHG collection at the Chatham Community Library on a long-term loan basis. These yearbooks were acquired through collaboration of Barbara Pugh and the Northwood Media Center Director.
- Currently, CCHA museum curator Jane Pyle is heading an effort to repair some of the yearbooks before they are turned over to the library. Once cataloged, the yearbooks will be available for in-library checkout by patrons.
- A special microfilm reader/printer/scanner funded by the James Milton Johnson and Laura Muse Blair Johnson Trust has been delivered to the library and the library staff and several CCHA

volunteers have been trained to use it. More than one-hundred reels of microfilm from the collection formerly at the Pittsboro Memorial Library have been transferred to CCL and are now being inventoried by the reference staff. Once that inventory is complete, CCHA's library committee will work with the staff to determine what additional available microfilm on Chatham and pre-Chatham Orange County should be added to the collection.

- George Moses Horton (ca. 1797-1883), a slave in Chatham County, wrote "*The Hope of Liberty*," the first book published in the South by a Black man. The George Moses Horton collection is a new collection of literature at the CCL that has been made possible through community donations consolidated by the Friends of the Chatham Community Library. A display of selections from this collection will be featured at the library in February. All library card holders may check out books from this collection.

What You Can You Do to Help - Contact Us [History@ChathamHistory.org](mailto:History@ChathamHistory.org)  
Donate Chatham County school yearbooks to CCHA. Let's build a great collection and make it available to Chatham County researchers.

Donate published family histories of families with Chatham ties to the Local History Genealogy collection at the Chatham Community Library. Share your family's story with others and preserve it for future generations.

Do you know of a good published resource on Chatham history? If it is not in the CCL collection, suggest it be added. Fill out a suggestion slip at the library.

### HELP YOUR EDITOR

We have a lot of material in this issue of the CCHA Newsletter, but believe it or not, we had to reach back deep into the archives to find an article to fill up almost one whole column here. (We will let you guess as to which column that was. How do we fix that, the best way if for us to ask for your help. Write something! We all have a touch of the author in us, so if you have an interesting anecdote on Chatham History, write it up and send it in. Sharing that way is a great idea!

### DID YOU KNOW...

you can access the most complete and up-to-date listing of Chatham County cemeteries and burials from your home computer? It's true! Just go to:

<http://www.CemeteryCensus.com/NC/Chat/Index.htm>

Need help finding a Chatham County cemetery or gravesite in our database?

Contact Bev Wiggins at

[CemeterySurvey@ChathamHistory.org](mailto:CemeterySurvey@ChathamHistory.org).

### LIZZY CHEEK



Do you know the story of our own "Lonesome Lizzy" out along Hwy 15-501? If not, here is a good reason to come to the next in the CCHA Lecture Series (see page 5) on March 6<sup>th</sup>. Lizzy's grave sits all alone out there along the highway, and as far as we can tell, has been that way since she died in 1919. We would love to know more about her so please tell us if you have any knowledge of this. Until then, come to the meeting and ask any of the Directors about her. We are sure they will be happy to tell you the story.

### BROTHERS OF THE BRUSH



**CCHA Partial Calendar for 2011**

March 6	26 <sup>th</sup> NC Regiment at Gettysburg - " <i>Chatham County Connection</i> " lecture by Dennis Brooks Annual Business Meeting
Wednesdays	Open Museum Day 12:00PM to 3:00PM
April 3	First Sunday - Open Museum Day 12:00PM to 3:00PM
May 1	First Sunday - Open Museum Day 12:00PM to 3:00PM
May 22	Civil War Sesquicentennial, " <i>Chatham Life on the Home Front</i> " lecture by LeRae Umfleet

**Always Remember to  
Bring a Friend to CCHA  
Both of you will be glad  
you did!**

(Continued from page 1)

determination to rebuild the county courthouse from insurance compensation, and following recommendations of a Courthouse Task Force, they confirmed the replication of the courtroom for the second floor and expanded museum space on the ground floor. A museum planning committee started meeting with the reconstruction architectural team to propose arrangements of exhibit and office space to tell the Chatham story - collecting and preserving the evolving cultural heritage of our past.

(Continued from page 3)

ness to work. Her childhood was in Pittsboro and her love of history and genealogy was grounded in her family roots and her father, Lemuel Johnson, who was Register of Deeds. Like so many, following graduation from Northwood she left for further education, work opportunities, and marriage. Eventually she, Marshall, and daughter Paige made their way back to Chatham. She is active with the Pittsboro Methodist Church and enjoys spending time with grandson Caden. Since her return to Chatham, she has worked in the schools and has served with numerous organizations. Her personal knowledge of local history is amazing.

**Cecil Wilson** has been involved in many areas of community action throughout Chatham County for many years. Cecil makes his home in the eastern part of the county but his reputation for hard work and caring for others reaches far from his local community. Meet Cecil, and you'll agree he adds his own touch everything he does.

Exercising the decision power in your vote is important no matter if it is a national election of a US President or a new Director for CCHA. We need to hear your voice to be sure we are serving your needs as you would like them to be served. Come to the Annual Meeting in Pittsboro on March 6<sup>th</sup> and meet your Directors.

## **CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, INC. INVITES YOU TO OUR ANNUAL MEETING AND HISTORICAL PROGRAM**

### **26th NC Regiment at Gettysburg - The Chatham County Connection Presented by Dennis Brooks, a Chatham native**

Dennis Brooks has for many years been a member of CCHA, a re-enactor with the 26 NCT, and a member of the Colonel John Lane Society. Dennis is a local historical resource and his program on the North Carolina troops at Gettysburg with the numerous Chatham County family connections will broaden our knowledge and understanding of the nation's history at that time in which Chathamites played an important role.

As 2011 begins the Civil War Sesquicentennial Anniversary, this program is first in a series for CCHA. Watch for future programs on "Chatham Life on the Home Front" and "The Emancipation Proclamation and its Celebration in Chatham County."

### **Central Carolina Community College, Pittsboro Campus Multipurpose Room, Building 2 Sunday, March 6, 2:00 pm**

Light refreshments and visiting after meeting and program.

#### **ASSOCIATION'S FINANCIAL REPORT BRIEF REVIEW 2010**

For the year of 2010, former Treasurer Beverly Wiggins stepped away from the position and the new Director and Treasurer named was Dan Perry, a longtime associate of CCHA as well as a former Director. During this year Dan changed our record keeping from Excel spreadsheet details to a Quicken Business software program.

At the annual meeting on March 6, please review the financial summary for 2010 and expected budget for 2011. In reviewing the past activities, we are continuing to refine and identify appropriate accounts to correctly reflect our financial transactions. During the year we were fiscally responsible with our expenses as well as carefully allocated donations received

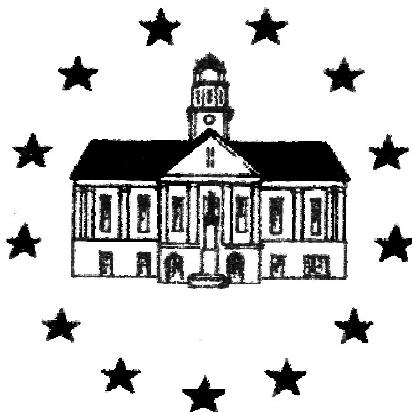
for several routine and special areas. We had a positive fiscal year. Budgeting for programs and activities during 2011 is still being reviewed, especially in the context of expected fundraising and costs for new museum development.

The budget for 2011 will be expanded to include expected information to be included as we discuss funding for the Museum and office spaces in the to-be rebuilt Courthouse.

# **CCHA**



**CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION, INC.**



**CCHA Newsletter**

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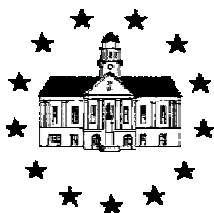
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