

Chatham County Historical Association

PO Box 93 · Pittsboro, NC 27312 · 919.542.6222 · chathamhistory.org



Volume 29, Issue 1

CCHA Newsletter

First Quarter 2017

Chatham County Historical Association Annual Membership Meeting and Program

Sunday, February 19, 2017, 2:00 PM

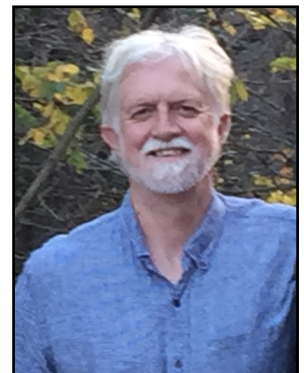
Historic Courthouse, Pittsboro, NC

Free and open to the public

Local History in the Path of Growth: Historic Preservation and Chatham Park by Paul Webb

Join us for CCHA's annual meeting and Paul Webb's presentation about ongoing efforts to identify, preserve, and interpret significant historical sites on the 7000+ acre Chatham Park property near Pittsboro. Paul is an archaeologist with TRC Environmental Corporation, and has been hired by Chatham Park to coordinate their historical preservation efforts. He will present an overview of what is known of the property's history, discuss ongoing efforts to relocate and save the 19th century Griffin-White house, and review the results of an intensive look at a 200-acre tract northeast of Pittsboro. Finally, he'll discuss ways in which CCHA members and the public can contribute to these efforts, and solicit input about the types of historical resources that are important to the community. Paul is a native of Georgia, and has lived in Chatham County since 1993. He has directed or managed archaeological and historic preservation projects across the Southeast.

Paul will welcome questions after his presentation and encourages anyone with information about the property to be developed at Chatham Park to share what they know to help him document the local history of the area.



Paul Webb, Archaeologist

A business meeting for members will be held following the program. The agenda will include a report of the year's activities, yearly treasurer's report and the election of new officers and Board Members. CCHA members are encouraged to attend and participate in the business of the Association.

President's Message by Barbara Pugh

This year of 2017 will be a really important year for CCHA. "We will get a new President!" Grimsley Hobbs has agreed to be the nominee for President of CCHA. With his interest in history and preservation, as well as his leadership skills, look for the Association and its programs to blossom. "Welcome, Grimsley!"

With delight and sadness, I look forward to my role as Past President. Being President of your association and working with all the good folks who call themselves Chathamites has been a rewarding experience. Don't think you're getting rid of me, I'll still be around but just in a new role.

Please read our newsletter carefully. There's a lot of information in here. We continue to work on the format for the newsletter to get it just right as a digital communication. With the elimination of paper printing and postage, we should be able to get information out to the membership in a more frequent and cost effective manner.

Come to our annual meeting, bring a friend. Give a membership to a friend. Visit us. Right there in the Courthouse Circle, we are very proud to showcase the history of the place where many of you call home.

CCHA Year in Review

CCHA Website by Bev Wiggins

In late 2016, CCHA totally revamped and updated its website to freshen the look and make the site compatible with mobile devices that folks use these days. Almost all of the content from the old website has been moved over and we've improved the description of our museum facilities and activities. Also added are new features, including the ability to join CCHA, renew memberships, and purchase many of the CCHA gift shop items online. We'll continue to refine the site and will be updating frequently to keep members and others informed about our activities and projects. Check in often at <http://www.chathamhistory.org/> to learn about the many faces of CCHA!

Cemetery Project by Bev Wiggins

Dedicated volunteers continue to work on CCHA's cemetery project—now in its 29th year—updating cemetery inventories and adding gravemaker photos. In 2016, four never-before-reported family cemeteries were inventoried, photographed, and added to our database on <http://cemeterycensus.com/nc/chat/>. A volunteer team headed by Glenn Lazarus photographed the Mitchell Chapel cemetery, and those photos and records will soon be available online.



The above marker is located in the recently-reported Richardson cemetery in southeast Chatham. Burials are from the Richardson and Harrington families.

Preservation by Bev Wiggins

CCHA's major preservation project in 2016 was planning for the restoration of the 1850s smokehouse rescued from the former Hill plantation—property on which the county's new Agriculture and Conference Center has been built. See the article about the smokehouse in this issue for more information. In addition, CCHA has supported efforts to relocate the Griffin-White house from property being developed by Chatham Park, and has researched other properties threatened by neglect or development. We also updated our handout, *Historical Preservation and Development in Chatham County NC: A Guide for Developers*, to encourage developers to recognize the value of local history and to work with us to preserve it.

Membership by Joyce Cotten

"The Mission of the Chatham County Historical Association is to preserve and communicate the history of Chatham County, North Carolina." The Chatham County Historical Association has attempted to do this by preserving the legacy of our ancestors, commemorate local heroes, and to preserve historic architecture.

Please encourage your friends and neighbors as well as family members that have moved out of the area to assist us with keeping the "history of Chatham" alive by documenting, displaying, and providing programs of historical interest.

A membership form can also be found on the CCHA website, <http://chathamhistory.org/pdfs/BecomeaMember.pdf>. New this year is the ability to pay your membership online.

Museum Report, 2016 by Cindy Schmidt

Activities in 2016—During the 2016 year, the museum was open 154 regular days with a total of 3,067 visitors. There were a total of 2,383 total volunteers hours during the year.

Museum—A new mobile exhibit cabinet was added to display new acquisitions to the Museum's Collection. The cabinet was handcrafted by Rouse Wilson from wood salvaged from the burned Courthouse. Northwood High School student artists painted four wood figures for visitors' pictures.

Special Tours—The "Barbara's of Fearington" group toured in February. Chatham County Council on Aging had both the Siler City and Pittsboro groups come in February. The Cub Scouts and 4H camp toured separately in March. Pittsboro High School Reunion Day in April arranged for the Museum to be open for its attendees. The Sheriff's Camp came in June. The wedding party that got married in the courthouse in July toured the museum. The Baptist Youth Choir visited the Museum in July.

Volunteer Appreciation Workgroup—The Workgroup began Saturday Volunteer Breakfasts on the third Saturday of the month. The Workgroup also does a Pot Luck dinner for volunteers. A Recruiting and Appreciation for Volunteers event was held the First Sunday in October. Each active Museum volunteer received a framed Elaine O'Neil Pittsboro notecard in appreciation for all the time and effort these wonderful volunteers give to the Chatham Historical Museum.

2016 Year Reports Continued on p. 3

The Fourth Grade Field Trips—Fourth graders, teachers, and parents are enthusiastic during their morning in the Historic Courthouse and Museum where they learn about Chatham history, civics, and government. About 10 volunteers provide the opportunity for students to identify artifacts, tour the Museum in depth, compare old and current maps of Chatham County, and played all the roles in the case of Goldilocks versus The Three Bears. Field Trip Sponsors are invited to a Sponsor Appreciation Day every year. The 2016 sponsors received a Capt. N. A. Ramsey Map in appreciation of their donation.

First Sunday in Pittsboro—Having the Museum open on the Pittsboro First Sunday has been very successful in bringing people into the Museum. A few Sundays the Museum had live music!

It takes volunteers to make these activities happen and to open Chatham County's front door to residents and to travelers. If you would like to help us and enjoy the camaradery, please contact us at: MuseumVolunteers@chathamhistory.org.

News of Interest

Collections--Currently the collections policy for the CCHA is being up-dated to better serve the needs of the association. With the generosity of people interested in saving our history through gifts to the collection, our materials and storage requirements are on a collision course. We have a hold on accepting items to the collection until we have completed our new collection policy to guide us in what we can accept, store, and adequately conserve.

Treasurer--In August all of the CCHA Board was saddened to learn that Jane Hinnant needed to resign from her Treasurer position. Because of health conditions and family needs, she felt it in her best interest to step away from her Treasurer position at CCHA. We all miss her but she remains involved with CCHA projects. In the interim, Lesley Richardson was named the Treasurer. At the annual meeting, Lesley will be a nominee for the position on a two-year basis.

Genealogical Queries--Hats off to Lesley Richardson who has taken on answering the genealogical queries that come through the website. She is a fine researcher and has made lots of friends with her in-depth replies.

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Help Restore the Smokehouse by K. Crabtree

Work will soon commence on the restoration of the 1850 smoke house that CCHA rescued from the property on which the county's new Agriculture and Conference Center is being built. A partnership between Central Carolina Community College and CCHA will offer a chance to help preserve this piece of Chatham County history and learn traditional building techniques at the same time. CCCC has created a dedicated class that will undertake the restoration of the post and beam smokehouse. The course begins February 18. Course Date: Saturdays from February 18th - March 25th (6 weeks) 9:00 am -2:00pm. Course Tuition: \$125. Registration Information: Call 919-718-7500 or <http://www.cccc.edu/ecd/find-classes/index.php?PublicationDepartment=Construction>.

Students enrolled in this hands-on course will learn a variety of historic construction and restoration techniques utilizing both period and modern tools. No prior experience with historic restoration or construction is required for the six-week course, which will be held on the CCCC campus in Pittsboro. Once restored, the smokehouse will be placed on the grounds of the new facility very near its original location where it will serve as a reminder of our county's rich cultural past. See CCHA's website <http://chathamhistory.org/pdfs/PreservationNews.pdf> for more information about the course and other ways to help.

In addition to actively working on the restoration, the CCHA is seeking contributions to help fund the purchase of materials and other items required to complete the project. Please speak to a CCHA member or go on line to the CCHA website at <http://chathamhistory.org/pdfs/SmokehouseDonationForm.pdf> to donate. The estimated cost of the project is \$10,000.

Thomas—CCHA Volunteer of the Year

At the Fall Volunteer Appreciation Event, Charles Thomas was named as the unanimous pick for Volunteer of the Year. Charles adds so much of himself to the many hours he spends on CCHA activities. He is the ultimate well-rounded volunteer as he is comfortable proudly showing visitors around, working with the 4th graders, or being the research assistant to visitors who drop in and want to find more information about their heritage in Chatham or to learn about Chatham's history. All of this is done with his warm smile and genuine desire to help folks. We are fortunate to have Charles serving as a face to the association. Be sure to thank him for his service.



Charles Thomas

CCHA Nominating Committee Report

The following slate of nominations for officers and board members for 2017 is put forward for the approval of the CCHA membership by the nominating committee.—Lee Sullivan, Charles Thomas, Beverly Wiggins

Officers—President: Grimsley Hobbs; Vice President: Lee Sullivan; Secretary: Carol Hall; Treasurer: Lesley Richardson; Past President: Barbara Pugh

Directors: (New) Thomas L. “Snuffy” Smith, Delphine Womack; Lesley Richardson; (Returning) Joyce Cotten; Kenneth Crabtree; Walter Harris; Cindy Schmidt; Richard Szary; Charles Thomas

Introducing our new nominees:

Thomas L. “Snuffy” Smith—Snuffy is a long-time resident of Pittsboro and a highly-regarded musician. Since childhood, Snuffy has had an interest in Native American artifacts and old tools. He describes his interest in history as being in “old ways” and “old stuff,” and not so much in politics and genealogy. We welcome Snuffy to the CCHA Board and look forward to the contributions of his enthusiasm and knowledge of old ways and old stuff to CCHA’s efforts to preserve and share Chatham County’s history.

Delphine Goldston Womack

Delphine is a native and current resident of Goldston. She attended J. S. Waters, did undergraduate study at NC A & T State University, received a BA in Business Administration from Shaw University, and a MA from NCSU. Delphine has 32 years of experience with the federal government, working with the Social Security Administration. She has a great passion for history and is a former CCHA museum volunteer. We are grateful that she has agreed to bring her management, public relations, and leadership skills to bear on CCHA’s mission as a new member of the CCHA Board.

Lesley Richardson—Lesley and her husband, Pat, moved to North Carolina in 1985 and have called Chatham County their home for almost a decade. In 2011, Lesley and Pat became members of the Chatham County Historical Association. After retiring, Lesley became active in volunteering in many areas of CCHA—assisting folks with their family history searches and volunteering as a greeter at the Museum.

Lesley worked for 18 years as a Media and Web Librarian for LEARN NC, a program of the School of Education at UNC-Chapel Hill that provided educational resources for K-12 teachers to use in their classrooms. In September 2016, Lesley was asked to become CCHA treasurer.