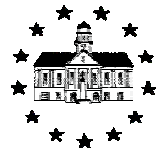




CCHA Newsletter



Volume 23 — Issue 2

Editor: R.T.Crowley - CROWLEY3@MINDSPRING.COM

Second Quarter 2011

UPDATE ON HISTORIC HOUSES

Three historic houses were moved to new sites on Small Street in a corner of the National Register's Pittsboro Historic District where they are provided with foundations as they await further disposition. The move was completed just before a groundbreaking ceremony for the judicial center took place on 5 May 2011.

The preservation of the Patrick St. Lawrence (or Yellow House), the Taylor House, and the McClenahan House has been a concern of the Chatham County Historical Association since 1999. At that time Chatham County purchased the tract of land on which they were situated for future use as a judicial center. CCHA sought ways to maintain the houses and raised funds in 2004 to repair a leaking roof, but no buyer could be found for the

county properties. When the county received a federal loan to finance the construction of the judicial center, state law required an agreement between the county and the State Historic Preservation Office, in the NC Department of Cultural Resources, before they could be moved from Pittsboro's National Register-listed historic district. This agreement required relocating the three houses to another site or sites in the district and negotiation with the non-profit North Carolina Preservation for further action.

The houses are available for restoration. Inquiries may be made to the Chatham County Director of Public Works:

DAVID.HUGHES@CHATHAMNC.ORG
919-545-8530, or Post Office Box 1550, Pittsboro, NC 27312.



Taylor House moves by remote control.

Photo by Robin James



Relocated houses on Small Street in Pittsboro

Photo by Jane Pyle



A tight squeeze for St. Lawrence House

Photo by Robin James



NEXT HISTORIC LECTURE PROGRAM

Sunday - 25 September 2011

Michelle Lanier, Acting Director of the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission, will present "A War with Many Voices: African American Memory and the Civil War," the last in our series commemorating the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, on 25 September 2011. Watch the website for details!



Building St. Lawrence House Foundation

Photo by Jane Pyle

CHATHAM HISTORY AT THE CHATHAM COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Thanks to funding from CCHA, several improvements have been made to the local history and genealogy collection at the Chatham Community Library (CCL).

To increase the durability of the local history and genealogy collection, CCHA provided funds for binding all softbound volumes in the collection. These volumes have now been bound and returned to the shelves.

CCHA purchased a cabinet for the microfilm collection, and funded the purchase of microfilm to fill-out that collection, including a fantastic array of county newspapers, wills, estate records, court minutes, apprentice bonds, bastardy bonds, divorce records, records of guardians, slave records, and tax lists and scrolls.

Twenty Northwood High School yearbooks for years between 1975 and 2009 have been added to the local history collection. The yearbooks are kept in a locked cabinet in the reference section for safe-keeping, but can be checked out for in-library use by anyone with a library card or photo-id. See a reference librarian for assistance.

Also of interest to Chatham researchers is the new blog, CCL on the Record, highlighting content from the library's microfilm collection of local historical newspapers, including *The Chatham Record*. The articles date as far back as 1879 and provide a glimpse into the daily life of Chatham residents from decades past. The collection includes advertisements, local events, news stories, and often-humorous columns. Local residents will likely recognize names and places mentioned in the articles, and readers are encouraged to share their thoughts and memories. Excerpts are posted each Monday, along with accompanying commentary from reference staff, and can be found at

WWW.CCLONTHERECORD.WORDPRESS.COM

The library invites patrons to explore Chatham County's past by visiting the library to use the local history and genealogy collection. Call the Reference Desk at 919-545-8086 for more information.

CHATHAM COUNTY: A HOTBED OF POPULISM

A conservative Democratic Party was North Carolina's dominant political force from 1877 until the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, almost a century, except for the decade of the 1890s. For that brief period in North Carolina, the Populist or People's Party gained significant power, and Chatham County was a leader in this movement. Historians have referred to the county as a "hotbed of Populism."

CCHA volunteer Jim Wiggins has written an account of the rise and fall of the Populist Party in Chatham County now available on the CCHA website. The paper extensively quotes the two Chatham newspapers of the time and identifies dozens of Chatham citizens participating, on one side or the other, in the politics of the day. A brief summary of the paper appears here. To read more, go to:

WWW.CHATHAMHISTORY.ORG.

The Populism of the 1890s was a movement to increase representation of the interests of common people. In North Carolina, as well as other parts of the county, the common people were rural, so it is not surprising the rise of the Populist Party in North Carolina began with the formation of the Farmers' Alliance. Following Reconstruction, North Carolina's farmers (like farmers throughout the South) were faced with a significant decline in crop prices, had difficulty in obtaining credit because of the shortage of money following the Civil War, and were often ensnared in a crop-lien system. By 1887, many farmers felt the Democrats had not done enough for agriculture and the stage was set for the formation of the Farmers' Alliance, among other things, to lobby for legislation to provide relief to farmers.

CCHA HOUSEKEEPING

We may seem to be late in the year asking this, but have you sent in your dues yet? If so, have you gotten a friend to join as well? Running an organization like CCHA requires funding and most of ours comes from your generous contributions to the effort.

Speaking of contributions, we can always use volunteers for all sorts of jobs, especially now as we work towards the new Museum in the rebuilt Courthouse. If you are wondering what you can do, ask! We can find work for willing hands.

A serious debate over the Alliance's forming a third political party evolved. One faction of the Alliance argued farmers had voted for Democrats for twenty-five years and obtained no relief; it was time to be more loyal to the Alliance than to the Democrats. Another faction wanted to remain within the Democratic Party, fearing a third party could split the Democrats' power-base and allow the minority Republicans, with support from many Blacks, to gain control, thereby jeopardizing white rule in the state. The "race issue" was one plaguing the Populists throughout the decade, as Democrats claimed the Populists were too pro-Black or not sufficiently pro-White supremacy.

In early 1892, Alliance leaders in North Carolina began to organize the Populist Party to challenge the Democrats. The Democrats won a sweeping victory in the state in the 1892 election, but Chatham County was different, showing significant support for many Populist candidates. Thus, Chatham was an early leader in the Populist movement, and by the 1894 election that movement would sweep the state.

Two Chatham newspapers chronicled the political struggles between the Populists and Democrats in the county during the decade of the 1890s, the pro-Populist *Chatham Citizen* and the pro-Democrat *Chatham Record*. It is from these papers we learn much of the story of what was happening in the politics of the county at the time.

Chatham produced Populist leaders such as John W. Atwater, William F. "Buck" Strowd, Alfred M. Self, Alexander M. "Sandy" Wicker, James Everett Bryan, Rufus Boxter Lineberry, and Robert James Powell. These men fought to secure state legislation which, among other things, fixed the legal interest rate for crop loans, lowered railroad freight rates, opened up the election process, restructured local government, and increased spending on education. At the end of the 1890s, the Democrats waged a campaign focusing on white supremacy, regained control, and passed legislation to overturn much of the Populists' progressive legislation.

To read more about this interesting time in Chatham County's history, go to the website of the Chatham County Historical Association:

WWW.CHATHAMHISTORY.ORG

CCHA

LIFE ON THE HOME FRONT

"Experiences on the home front differed depending on where in North Carolina you lived," opened LeRae Umfleet as she began her presentation for the Chatham County Historical Association on 22 May 2011. Chief of Collections Management for the Department of Cultural Resources, Ms Umfleet enjoys learning more about women's roles during the Civil War in her spare time, including sewing period fashions and sharing her love of history with groups like the CCHA.

Describing a number of the ways women contributed to the war effort, Ms. Umfleet showed a photograph of a sewing machine to make the point sewing machines were among the first items to be

destroyed as Northern troops raided homes of valuable goods contributing to the war effort and one of a hat made from cornhusks to demonstrate the need for innovation.

Reading from a letter from Jacob Hadley to his mother in which he asked her to make him some new pants, Umfleet pointed out the letter showed mail was getting back and forth between the military camps and home, along with people able to deliver food and clothing, and even the casualties from disease, as she used another Hadley letter to describe the death of a brother, whose body was returned for burial.

The second of a three-part series com-

memorating the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, Ms Umfleet followed a program in April presented by Chatham's Dennis Brooks, describing the Battle of Gettysburg. The final program in the series will be on 25 September 2011, when Michelle Lanier, Acting Director of the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission, will present "*A War with Many Voices: African American Memory and the Civil War.*" Both the Umfleet and Lanier programs were arranged through the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources "Civil War 150" Committee with a wide range of resources and activities planned for the three-year commemoration program.



Modeling a period dress she made herself, LeRae Umfleet pointed out the Northern blockade made materials very expensive and fashions were well behind times. Note her black-bordered "mourning" handkerchief.

Photographs by Bev Wiggins

LAZY DAYS OF SUMMER?

This should be the time when we enjoy the lazy days of summer. CCHA Board and Exhibit Committee members are enjoying these days, but in a different way. The work of designing and developing the new museum is ongoing with deadlines to meet to have the Museum open upon the completion of the Courthouse in Fall 2012. We also added the element of fundraising to the mix of jobs to be accomplished. We appreciate all your gifts. If you are not on our donor list please let us know. We can help you with a pledge schedule, a way to honor someone special, suggest a naming opportunity, or assist in transferring a gift of stock. Don't be bashful. If you want to help us reach our goal of having a fine museum for the people of Chatham, step up! Sign up! And let's get this museum

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Shirley Slayer
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Allen and Elizabeth Moye

THANK YOU ALL!!

CEMETERY PROJECT PROGRESS

Beverly Wiggins, Cemetery Survey Coordinator

CCHA's cemetery project is an ongoing effort. In the past few months, we have added several hundred photographs to the CEMETERY-CENSUS.COM website thanks to volunteers such as Julie King-McDaniel (single-handedly photographing five large cemeteries in the Gulf area), Guy Arnold (tackling St. Bartholomew's Episcopal cemetery in Pittsboro), and Paul Wilson, Sandra Ellington, June and Marion Horton, and several others sending photos of gravestones from all over the county. Our thanks to all who have contributed to this important project!

Two behind-the-scenes volunteers devote many hours to make the cemetery project data available to everyone. David Peterson keeps the official records for the project, painstakingly entering and organizing all of the data we collect on cemeteries and burials and keeping up with corrections and additions. Allen Dew, posts our data, along with photographs of gravestones contributed by volunteers, to his CEMETERYCENSUS.COM website, so anyone with Internet access can visit the gravesites. Visit they do! Last month, the Chatham County portion of Allen's website got more than 4,200 visits! Many thanks to David and Allen for their dedication to this project!

To give you an idea of the magnitude of this project, here are a few statistics. As of this writing, the Chatham County project has recorded 576 cemeteries and 30,880 burials. We have at least one photograph for 120 of the 576 cemeteries, and more than 5,000 photographs for the 30,800 burials. If you have not looked at the cemetery project data recently, take a look. You can see information for each cemetery we have recorded, and each gravestone in the database at WWW.CEMETERYCENSUS.COM.

There is a lot of good information available on Chatham cemeteries and burials thanks to this project, a CCHA priority for more than twenty years, but there is also much work left to be done. We especially need volunteers to photograph gravestones in church cemeteries. If you would like to get involved, contact Bev Wiggins, at

CEMETERYSURVEY@CHATHAMHISTORY.ORG or 919-542-4478.

Most-viewed Chatham County cemeteries during May 2011:

H12.1 - Oakwood - Siler City
K25.1 - St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church
E33.2 -- Lystra Baptist Church
Q23.1 - Goldston United Methodist Church
G78.1 -- Brush Creek Baptist Church

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.

GAINEY'S STORE:

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Gainey's Store once sold groceries and lots of shoes. Before then, the site was the home to Central Carolina Farmers Exchange. For many recent years county government has called the building home for the Facilities Management Department. With the beginning of the construction of the Judicial Center and the need for parking, the old building was demolished.



TUESDAY MORNING HISTORY

If you would like to "sit a spell" and share history stories related to Chatham, the Tuesday Morning History Sharing group may be just what you need. An informal group of self-designated "historians" gather and share historical stories, objects, book reviews, and sometimes a trip out into the countryside. The group usually meets at the Community College at 10:00am. Contact Kay Judge at 542-4319 to verify date and location of meeting. The topic for the day is determined by the spontaneity of those attending and their interest.

MANLEY LAW OFFICE WINDOW

REPLACEMENTS CONTINUE

Manly Law Office continues to improve under the direction of the Questors. The Questors Group has received a grant to help them finish the windows of the Manly Law Office. Our hats are off to their efforts to make the little office "snug" once again.

GRAVESTONES REMOVED FROM CHATHAM RETURNED 30+ YEARS LATER

Bev Wiggins gets calls about gravestones and cemeteries all the time. She hears from people looking for the graves of their Chatham ancestors, reporting the location of a cemetery not recorded by CCHA, or reporting damage to a cemetery, but the call she got from Early Petty back in 2009 was probably the most unusual call she has received to date.

"He said he had two grave markers that belonged in Chatham County and he wanted to get them back here," Wiggins wondered how Petty had ended up with the two markers. The headstones, for William Stephen Petty and Mary Jennett Strowd Petty, were removed by members of Petty's family back in the 1970s because they had been broken by livestock and the family was concerned continued trampling would damage them even further. "I've seen old headstones trampled into shards by livestock," Wiggins said, "however, moving a headstone from the grave it marks is rarely a good idea."

Older members of the Petty clan passed the grave markers along to younger ones for safe-keeping. When Petty contacted Wiggins the markers were at his home in Virginia. Wiggins was doubtful she would be able to precisely locate the graves the headstones should have been marking, but when she checked the CCHA cemetery records she found not only the location of the family cemetery, but a notation of two graves with only headstone bases. "We were lucky those bases were there," Wiggins

said. "otherwise, we would not have known which graves to put them on. Mary Jennett's grave has a footstone with her initials, so we had all of the clues we needed to put the headstones back where they belonged."

Wiggins reported the good news. It was possible to get the markers back on the proper graves and the owners of the surrounding property had fenced the pasture so livestock could no longer enter the cemetery. The not-so-good news was the cemetery was some distance from present day roads, over rough ground. "We had a lovely visit with Earl," Wiggins remembered. "We told him we didn't yet know how we were going to get the markers back to the cemetery, but we promised we'd find a way."

Then the property owner volunteered her son and his four-wheeler. The four headstone pieces were carefully transferred onto the four-wheeler, driven slowly to the cemetery site, and gently leaned against the appropriate bases.

Much remains to be done, but now the headstones have been returned to the graves of Mary Jennett and William Stephen Petty, the Petty family can make arrangements to have the them repaired, if they wish. This is a cemetery story with a happy ending. The information about who was buried in those two graves easily could have been lost forever. It was not because of the responsible actions of Earl Petty, the kindness of the Phillips family, and a generous measure of good luck.

CCHA Partial Calendar for 2011

Wednesdays	Open Museum Day 12:00PM to 3:00PM
First Sundays	Open Museum Day 12:00PM to 3:00PM
First Tuesdays	History Sharing Group - Contact Kay Judge at 542-4319
Sept 2-4	Old Fashioned Farmers Weekend by Silk Hope Ruritan
Sept 10, 17, 24	Photograph collection days at Pittsboro, Siler City, and Goldston. Bring precious historical photographs for scanning.
Sept 25	<i>A War with Many Voices: African American Memory and the Civil War</i> ; Michelle Lanier, Third in the Sesquicentennial Series for 2011

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

RESTORED CASUALTIES OF FIRE RETURNED TO HISTORICAL MUSEUM

"I'm excited and impressed with the restoration work Susanne and Maritime Studies graduate students have done," beamed Marolyn McDiarmid on seeing two historical treasures on their return to the Chatham Historical Museum on 10 May 2011, adding, "Excellent work!"

A late-nineteenth century seal press and an

CCHA EXHIBITS COMMITTEE

Since November 2010, the Exhibits Committee has been meeting to create the format and content for the new museum exhibits housed in the rebuilt courthouse.

What should be included? How should the topics be subdivided? After several approaches the committee settled on the organization of the project. The new museum will be housed in the northeast quadrant of the first floor of the courthouse. The exhibits will basically cover the four walls and stretch into the adjoining floor space at some points. The center of the room will have tables and chairs where visitors can sit and students can work or listen to a presentation.

Wall one will have a timeline of Chatham's history from 1600 to today entitled "The Chatham Story." Wall two reflects the people having lived in Chatham and is called "Voices of Chatham." The voices to be spotlighted may be of a group of people or may be an individual voice. Wall three will tell the story of education in the county, and will feature a cutaway of a classroom as well as a cutaway of a general store. The general store is the anchor for "Community Life" as well as "Early Churches." Wall four reflects "How Chatham Made a Living" and emphasizes agriculture as well as industry.

The members of the Exhibits Committee, headed by Chair Susan Little, are working very hard this summer to complete their initial scripts and illustrative work so it may be turned over to the professional design team headed by Mike Cindric at Design Dimensions in Raleigh. Advising us on the historical content are Gene Brooks and Joe Burke, former educators with an avocation for and keen knowledge of the history of Chatham.

In September we will be seeking some specific pictures and artifacts. We trust you members will look through your attics and join in the excitement as we approach "A New Day."

early business machine called a stenograph, now cleaned and protected from deterioration, were returned to the Chatham County Historical Association, Inc. in even better condition than they were when they were originally given to the historical group. Soon after the disastrous courthouse fire of 28 March 2010, Susanne Grieve, now Director of Conservation in the Department of History's Program in Maritime Studies at East Carolina University, offered to assess damage to selected artifacts in the Chatham Historical Museum, and went on to offer pro-bono services of her department's conservation laboratory to treat the objects.

A seal press for embossing the corporate seal of the Hadley-Peoples Manufacturing Company, and donated to the Chatham Historical Museum in 2001 by Paul W. Baker, suffered water damage from the courthouse fire. Rusting of the cast iron press caused both stamp and the lion's head shaft to fuse, but were freed in the lab. "Because you told us student visitors had been able to handle the press, our treatment of this piece was designed so it would withstand careful handling," Ms. Grieve said.

In a research report, Nicole Wittig described her identification of the late-nineteenth century stenograph, a kind of shorthand machine, previously thought to be a Civil War coding device. "This piece was particularly interesting because it combined several materials," Ms Grieve said. The keys are an early type of plastic, Bakelite, while the frame is iron, and a carrying case is leather mounted on cardboard. Also used in this early form of typewriter were brass, wood, felt, rubber, and inked ribbon. After cleaning, the colors of both artifacts are bright and the century-old pieces are ready to go on display. "They have a lot of life left in them," Ms Grieve said. "I really enjoyed working on this."

"We are deeply grateful to Ms Grieve and her conservation class for their meticulous work in restoring these artifacts to full glory," said Jane Pyle, museum curator, adding, "The respect for the objects was matched only by the enthusiasm of students and instructor alike for working with the artifacts." The artifacts and a report with details of the conservation work will be exhibited at the Chatham Historical Museum during regular hours through August 2011 and in the new museum in the restored courthouse.

SAVING HISTORY ONE PICTURE AT A TIME

CCHA will be holding photograph gathering days. If you have special pictures in your family collection representing the essence of Chatham County people, we would like to scan them digitally. Please bring your photos. We can scan them while you are there, return it to you almost immediately, and you have contributed to the "story of Chatham" for others to appreciate in years to come. While you wait we can fill out the necessary paperwork for identification and permission for CCHA to add to our collection.

We are particularly interested in community functions such as corn shucking, quilting bees, harvesting crops, crop field work, dinner on the grounds, and so many other activities showing how we lived in the past. Maybe you have some special pictures showing recognition of people for special jobs well done, be it in the textile plant, in the military, or at agricultural fairs. We know there are a lot of good things out there.

The dates planned at the moment are Saturdays, September 10, 17, and 24. As time nears, we will set specific locations and times for sessions in Pittsboro, Goldston, and Siler City.

Look for more info on our website in the local newspaper, and on the Chatham Chat List.

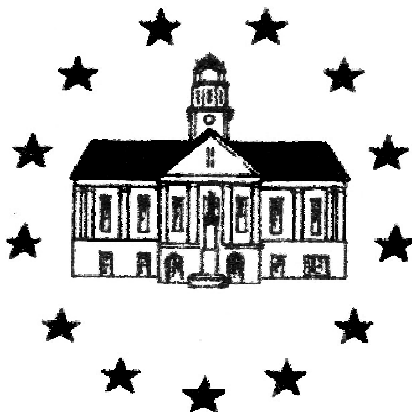


Susanne Grieve explains restoration treatment of stenograph, as Marolyn McDiarmid, retired ECU faculty member, looks on.

Photograph by Barbara Pugh

CCHA

**CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION, INC.**



CCHA Newsletter

Published by the Chatham County Historical Association, Inc.

Post Office Box 93, Pittsboro, NC 27312

Email: HISTORY@CHATHAMHISTORY.ORG

Web: [HTTP://CHATHAMHISTORY.ORG/](http://CHATHAMHISTORY.ORG/)

Published four times per year. Subscription is included with membership.

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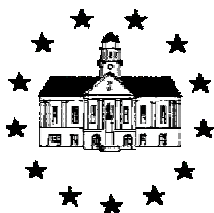
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