

# Chatham County Historical Association

PO Box 93 · Pittsboro, NC 27312 · 919.542.6222 · [chathamhistory.org](http://chathamhistory.org)



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CCHA Newsletter

Second Quarter, 2017

## Chatham County Coal Mining: Livelihoods and Lost Lives

**Presented by Mr. Forest Hazel**

Sunday, June 18, 2017, 2:00 PM  
Historic Courthouse, Pittsboro, NC  
*Free and open to the public*

On the morning of May 27, 1925, explosions in the Carolina Mine shook the Chatham County village of Coal Glen and took the lives of 53 men. This accident—the largest industrial disaster in North Carolina’s history—will be the focus of a presentation by historian Forest Hazel on June 18, 2017 at 2:00pm in the Historic Chatham County Courthouse.

Mr. Hazel will speak about the history of the mining industry in Chatham County, the numerous accidents that plagued it, the impact of the industry on North Carolina’s economy, and what life was like for the miners and their families. Photographs and artifacts will be displayed.

He has a BA in Anthropology and a MPH degree, both from UNC-Chapel Hill. Most of his work for the past 35 years concerned the history of American Indian communities in the Carolinas, but for the past year and a half he has been working on the Deep River coalfields project. The interest of Mr. Hazel in this coal mining project is a story in its own. He strongly felt that these stories should be promoted and remembered. Because of his work and collaboration with others, a North Carolina Historical Marker was created for the Coal Glen history and dedicated recently. It is located along Highway 15-501 South at the intersection with the southern end of Walter Bright Road.

Mr. Hazel’s presentation is sponsored by the Chatham County Historical Association. The event is free and the public is welcome.

More information about the program can be found on our website and questions can be sent to [history@chathamhistory.org](mailto:history@chathamhistory.org)



*Coal Glen disaster, News and Observer (Raleigh), May 29, 1925*



### Dedication Ceremony

At the dedication program for Coal Mines marker were left to right James Van Comer, Earl Ijames, Forest Hazel, and Barbara Pugh. Mr. Comer, local historian and genealogist from Sanford, and Earl Ijames with NC Archives and History were instrumental in helping Mr. Hazel with his research. Barbara was at the meeting representing CCHA.

## CCHA receives the 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.



*Paul Webb and Stephen Davis examining the Broyles collection*

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.

## Local History Field Trips Celebrate 4th Year

Chatham County Historical Association's field trip volunteers and sponsors are celebrating the completion of their 4th year hosting Chatham's fourth grade student field trips. Over 800 students from 13 schools visited the Chatham Historical Museum and Historic Courthouse during the course of the 2016-2017 school year. On each tour, small groups of students rotate through four activity areas, then assemble in the courtroom for the finale with a re-enactor from Chatham's past.

CCHA appreciates support from the 2016-2017 community sponsors: Chad Virgil of Edward Jones Investments, Chatham Business Services, Chatham County Schools, Hobbs Architects, PA, Pam Herndon of State Farm Insurance, Patty Walters, Pittsboro Feed, Pittsboro Police Department, Pittsboro Toys, and Susan and Bob Little.

K-5 Instructional Program Facilitator and CCHA liaison, Daphne Terry, has provided invaluable advice and assistance to the field trip team members each year. "CCHA's fourth grade field trips have provided Chatham County School students the wonderful opportunity to experience, participate, and be inspired while learning about the rich and diverse history of Chatham County.





## From the CCHA Chairman Grimsley Hobbs

Dear members, friends, and volunteers,

Thank you all for your continuing to support the CCHA. It has been a productive five months and exciting things are happening.

- The number of people connecting to our new and improved website is higher than ever.
- The collections are being evaluated and reorganized. A new storage space has been found that will help preserve our important documents.
- The reconstruction of the smokehouse is under way and will be completed in the fall. (Donations are requested)
- Membership lists have been updated and efforts are being made to attract new members and reclaim old members who have strayed away.
- The Museum Committee and the museum volunteers are doing a great job covering the museum and programs.
- Interesting lecture programs on coal mining and Jones Ferry Road and ferry have been arranged for our gatherings in June and September.

There is always more we can do to preserve and present the history of Chatham County. If you have a particular interest or if you would simply like to be member, please contact the Chatham County Historical Association.



**Preservation Complete for Marshall Log Cabin.** New life for the Marshall log cabin has been found—it has been turned into a conference room for Hobbs Architects, PA. Originally CCHA intended to restore it and use it as a learning center for school children. Sometimes life gets in the way of reaching goals. The cabin was sold, moved, and restored. The cabin is now refurbished, re-purposed, and preserved. Beautiful, isn't it?



## Smokehouse Restoration Progressing

Work on the restoration of the Smokehouse is on a hiatus for the summer. During the spring, students from Central Carolina Community College worked to help CCHA restore the building. The foundation stones are now in place for the addition of a smokehouse in the fall. At this point, CCHA is accepting donations to fund the needed work on the project. Donations made be made to CCHA and sent to PO Box 93, Pittsboro, NC 27312. Your tax-deductible gift will be acknowledged – and appreciated.

For a more complete story of the smokehouse and its restoration and photographs, please visit our website at [www.chathamhistory.org](http://www.chathamhistory.org).

## Barbara Pugh Recognized for Service as CCHA President

Outgoing President, Barbara Pugh, was recognized at the Chatham County Historical Association's annual meeting on February 19, 2017, for ten years of service as president of the organization. Among other accomplishments, Pugh oversaw the recovery of the organization from the 2017 fire in the historic courthouse, which at that time housed the association's small historical museum



Grimsley Hobbs, incoming President of the CCHA, presented Pugh with a plaque made from mahogany salvaged from the courtroom after the fire.

### CCHA Officers—2017

President: Grimsley Hobbs  
Vice President: Lee Sullivan  
Secretary: Cindy Schmidt  
Treasurer: Lesley Richardson  
Archivist: Richard Szary  
Past President: Barbara Pugh

### CCHA Director —2017

Joyce Cotten  
Kenneth Crabtree  
Walter Harris  
Thomas "Snuffy" Smith  
Charles Thomas  
Delphine Womack

*(Local History . . . Continued from p 2)*

The volunteers and docents have been dedicated in making sure that not only is the fourth grade field trip enjoyable but also, truly educational.” Assistant Superintendent for Academic Services & Instructional Support, Dr. Amanda Hartness, enjoyed her visit for Sponsor Appreciation Day. “We are very grateful for the annual opportunity for our 4th grade students to visit the Historic Courthouse. I had the pleasure of attending the event with students last year and the students were very engaged and learned so much about the history of Chatham. We appreciate the collaboration with the Chatham County Historical Association to provide this excellent field trip for our students. We hope to see this event continue for many years to come.” (See full article on the CCHA Website: <http://chathamhistory.org/pdfs/LocalHistoryFieldTripsCelebrate4thYear.pdf>)

### **Manly Law Office needs some TLC**

As caretakers of the Manly Law office, CCHA needs to provide some Tender Loving Care in the form of a new paint job and some repairs. We have gotten a quote of between \$1,700 and \$2,500 which would include scraping and painting with two coats, chimney gap caulked, flashing, soffit and fascia would be repaired/replaced as needed. The Board approved a \$1,000 lead appropriation and encourages individual donations to supplement our funding. More about the Manly Law office can be found on our website at <http://www.chathamhistory.org/pdfs/CharlesManlysLawOffice.pdf> and donations may be made through PayPal on line or mailed to our CCHA treasurer at PO Box 93, Pittsboro, NC, 27312. Of course, your donations are tax deductible as CCHA is a 501c(3) organization.

### **School Yearbooks**

CCHA and the Chatham County Public Libraries have collaborated to make Chatham County yearbooks accessible. All three Chatham libraries have yearbook collections, and many of the older yearbooks are also available online. For full details of how to submit a yearbook, check the following link on the website: <http://www.chathamhistory.org/pdfs/ChathamCountyYearbooks.pdf>



Individual address labels

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