



# CCHA Newsletter



Volume 19 — Issue 2

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Third Quarter 2007

## NEW LOOK AND NEW SCHEDULE

You probably could not help but notice your CCHA Newsletter has a new look and feel this time around. We have a new Editor for our publication, and while he promises to keep things as professional and authentic as they have been in the past, a bit of newness is almost always a good thing.

The first item on that agenda is the scheduling of the CCHA Newsletter. The publication will now move to a quarterly footing with new issues coming out at the start of each quarter, on the first of January, April, July, and October. We realize we may have missed an issue earlier this year, but that gets fixed with this Third Quarter issue coming out on the first of July.

Having a regular publication schedule is important to an organization like the CCHA. It allows our members to see a continuity in the organization, and ensures we are always up to date on the events and happenings of the group and around the state.

The second item we considered was the content. You can continue to expect the same level of high quality in the stories and articles published here, but we also want to make this as avail-

able as possible to you as a member. If you have any talent at all with writing, and have written something involving the history of Chatham County, North Carolina, we want to hear from **YOU!** Submissions are always welcome, and that is a great way to be involved.

Any organization, like the proverbial chain, is only as strong as its weakest link. The only way for the CCHA to continue its work is through the efforts of all of us together. If you have the time and inclination to take on parts of any of our projects, or would like to be a volunteer or docent at a CCHA event, please do not be shy about letting us know. Frankly, we need all the help we can get, and none of the jobs are particularly difficult. Besides, you will learn more about Chatham County history every step of the way.

Lastly, we would like to express our deepest and most heartfelt thanks to Jane Pyle for her work as Editor of the CCHA Bulletin for many years. She has been, and certainly continues to be, a tower of strength for all of us. We look forward to her work as Curator of the Museum and continuing as Editor of the CCHA Journal.

## THE THOMAS COLLECTION

Mary McKenzie Cox and her daughter McKenzie Cox Miller of Winston-Salem donated 35 original documents relating to the Thomas family of north central Chatham County to the Chatham Historical Museum. With dates between 1826 and 1893, the papers include deeds, a will, mortgages, loan receipts, and other records.

Three generations of the Thomas family, from near Alamance County in Hadley Township, are named: Alvis, James M., Caroline, G.W., Priscilla, and Alfred. Other familiar Chatham names in the documents are Lewis, Lindley, Glosson, Baldwin, Newlin, McBane, and Love. The earliest paper in the collection is a deed transferring title to one hundred acres on Lick Branch from Henry Lewis to his son William. On display is a deed transferring title from William to his son Ruffin.

Another set of documents illustrates the hardships of farming near the turn of the century. Between 1881 and 1894, G.W. Thomas borrowed sums ranging from \$9.68 to \$130.00, most from a McBane. Some of these were unsecured loans; chattel mortgages were issued with G.W.'s mule, mare, wagon, and/or cows for collateral; and five mortgage deeds were signed at different times for his one hundred fifteen acres, one marked with payments of 10¢ and 20¢.

The most recent document is an official letter showing the last will and testament of James M. Thomas had been proved in court and Ira Braxton had qualified as executor. The will is being probated in 1893 and a carbon copy is attached, noteworthy for having been typewritten at this early date.

James Thomas' will provides for his wife Caroline to receive all his property during her lifetime, and to dispose of one-third of the land as she chooses, not a common practice during this period. The other two-thirds are equally divided between sons George W. and Alfred J. Thomas after her death.

## NORTH CAROLINA TOUR OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS

The official North Carolina copy of the original Bill of Rights is now touring our state, and only four locations remain where you will be able to view this extremely historic document during the tour. The tour began on 2 February 2007 in the history-filled Search Room of the State Archives, and has already made its way through Fayetteville, Wilmington, and Edenton. The tour is entitled *Liberty and Freedom: North Carolina's Tour of the Bill of Rights*.

"The Bill of Rights plays an important part in the daily life of the United States, and North Carolina played a key part in the birth of the Bill of Rights," said Dr. Jeffrey Crow, head of

the Office of Archives and History in the Department of Cultural Resources. "*North Carolina refused to join the United States until a Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution.*"

North Carolina's original copy of the Bill of Rights was taken from the State Capitol in 1865 during the Union occupation of Raleigh during the final days of the Civil War. It came home to North Carolina in 2005 after 140 years. North Carolina Governor Mike Easley set in motion the creation of a team of law enforcement officials from North Carolina, Pennsylvania, the FBI, and the US Attorney's Office to foil dealers trying to sell the document to a mu-

(Continued on page 3)

## NEW SHUTTERS FOR THE MANLY LAW OFFICE

After more than ten years of semi-nudity, the Manly Law Office in downtown Pittsboro once again is graced with green shutters to set off last year's repainted exterior, thanks to a generous grant from Harvey Gunter, former resident of Pittsboro and now living in Durham. Gunter, a generous benefactor to the historic building, also supplied the interior with period furniture on an indefinite loan, and paid to repaint the roof. The re-installation of custom shutters to fit the large windows is complemented by new curtains made by Judith Peterson.



**VOLUNTEERS DOUG CORDARO AND CARL BIGNESS INSTALL SHUTTERS AT THE HISTORIC MANLY LAW OFFICE**

The Manly Law Office's new look was begun last year when local Boy Scout Troop assisted Reid Montgomery in his Eagle Scout project to scrape and paint the exterior.

Originally located on Hillsboro Street near its intersection with Salis-

bury Street, the one-room building was typical of small offices in the mid-nineteenth century. Moved from its home site about the time of the Civil War, the structure by 1960 was located on an empty lot on Salisbury Street, behind downtown stores. In 1966 the building was donated to the Chatham County Historical Association (CCHA) by Mr. and Mrs. Henry K. Blair and moved to its current location on Masonic Street, where it was renovated in mid-1800s style. Finished in time for the county's bi-centennial celebration in 1971, the Manly Law Office is open on special occasions and by appointment.

Charles Manly was governor of North Carolina from 1848 to 1850, culmination of a career in law and politics. Born in 1795 at the family plantation, Oakmont, northwest of Pittsboro, Manly attended the Pittsborough Academy and the University of North Carolina before moving to Raleigh in 1814 to prepare for the bar. Practicing law in Raleigh and Pittsboro, he was appointed Chatham County Attorney. In 1842 he engaged George Ellington to build his office, which he called Ft. Snug, reflecting the after-hours use as a meeting place for fellow lawyers. The building was sold after he became governor, and Manly probably did not return to Pittsboro after his term of office, his sister having married and moved to Richmond County. Manly died in 1871 and is buried in City Cemetery, Raleigh.

## NC CEMETERY LAWS

The NC General Assembly has given final approval to bills affecting the cemetery laws of the state, toughening penalties for grave vandals and defining what are abandoned burial sites. The Senate approved unanimously two bills, approved earlier by the House, and sent them to Gov. Mike Easley for signature. One bill makes defacing a grave marker, tombstone, or other cemetery monument a felony no matter how small the damage. The other defines abandoned and public cemeteries, in part to encourage better accounting of these locations by county commissioners and local historical groups.

## MUSEUM INTERNSHIP GRANT ANNOUNCED

The Chatham County Historical Association (CCHA) announced today it has received a \$600.00 grant to fund an internship for the museum operated by the organization. The grant was received from the Chatham Seekers Chapter of the Questers, a national philanthropic organization.

Barbara Pugh, President of the CCHA said, "*There are many things needing to be done around our museum, and this grant will allow us the extra pair of hands we need to advance many of our projects.*"

The Chatham Seekers noted the grant was being made for the "terrific job" being done by the CCHA in protecting, preserving, and disseminating the history of Chatham County. CCHA has pledged to put it to good use.

## SIGNIFICANT DONATION TO THE CHATHAM LIBRARY FUND CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION PLEDGES \$25,000

Pittsboro, NC - 18 June 2007 - The Chatham County Historical Association (CCHA) announced today it is pledging the sum of \$25,000 to the Chatham Community Library for the construction and furnishing of an area in the new library devoted to the local history, heritage, and genealogy of the county.

"*This is a very important matter to us,*" said Barbara Pugh, President of the Chatham County Historical Association. "*Our group is all about the preservation of the history and heritage of the county, and feel this is a wonderful way to help educate our citizens about it.*"

The history area is planned as a part of the new Chatham Community Library to house those books and items of historic significance kept at the library for the use of its patrons. These items include county and family histories, genealogical records, gravesite registrations, publications on local history, and clipping files. Many of these items are irreplaceable, and deserve the special handling and attention this area, dedicated to the preservation of our history, can provide.

The Chatham Community Library is in the process of planning its new facility to be the headquarters library for the county. It will be located on the campus of Central Carolina Community College, and jointly operated with the college. This action on the part of the Chatham County Historical Association is by way of providing tangible support for this project, and an indicator of its importance to the future of our community.

## THE HARBISON PROJECT

In December 2006, the developer of Harrison Pond subdivision extended to the Chatham County Historical Association (CCHA) the privilege of removing materials from a house on the property before it was removed for road construction. In turn, CCHA named Carl Bigness as its agent to do this work. As the deconstruction began, Jane Pyle searched old deeds, census materials, and newspapers for information of former occupants. Neighbors and visitors to the site recalled bits of history and lore associated with the property as well as personal knowledge of recent occupants.

Photographs documenting the deconstruction and artifacts found during the process are on display in the Chatham Historical Museum. Among the items are linen shirts and pants, much patched and badly soiled; two unmatched shoes, one with the sole and the wooden pegs holding it in place; nails and pegs of various sizes, papers from the Extension Homemakers Club in the Mt. Pleasant area, and a salmon brick from the two-story chimney.

Part of the display is a 1924 photograph of the house identified as the Pace House. James Pace first appears in federal censuses for Chatham County in 1850, where he is identified as a mechanic, 32 years old. He does not appear again in censuses until 1880, when he is listed as a farmer and miller, 57 years old, and married to Elizabeth, 46. Elizabeth was the daughter of the Rev. Daniel Hackney and granddaughter of the Daniel Hackney whose mill (still standing) is on the Rocky River in present-day Siler City.

James Pace bought land and a mill on the Haw River in 1867 from Stephen W. Cotten, a wealthy Pittsboro businessman. Capt. Ramsey identified this mill as "Pace & Cotten" on his 1870 map. In 1907, 76 acres including the mill were purchased by J. J. Peoples, husband of Elizabeth and James' daughter Nettie. James (1824-1884), Nettie (1860-1942), and J. J. Peoples are buried at Mt. Pleasant Church, and Elizabeth (1829-1920) is buried at Love's Creek Church where she continued to be a member after her marriage.

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seum in Philadelphia. The recovery of the document was the result of this undercover operation in 2003

*Liberty and Freedom* is part of *History Happens Here*, the NC Department of Cultural Resources theme for 2007. Each stop on the tour will feature speakers highlighting a different amendment. The remaining stops on the tour are:

- Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina, will highlight Non-Enumerated Rights during Constitution Week, 17-23 September. The Bill of Rights will be on display at the North Carolina Museum of History.
- Charlotte, home of the Mecklenburg Resolves, will showcase the Right to Assemble/Petition, 5-7 October. The Bill of Rights will be on display at the library and performing arts center *ImaginOn*.
- Asheville, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association, will host Right to a Jury Trial and Due Process, 8-10 November. The Bill of Rights will be on display at UNC-Asheville.
- Greensboro, site of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse will feature the Right to Bear Arms, 30 November to 2 December. The Bill of Rights will be on display at the Greensboro Historical Museum.

Signatures on the North Carolina copy include Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg as speaker of the House of Representatives and John Adams as US vice-president and president of the Senate. The document also has the signatures of John Beckley, clerk of the House of Representatives and

## CCHA THERMOMETER PROJECT

CCHA is planning an exhibit of advertising thermometers from Chatham county businesses. If you have such a thermometer, and are willing to loan it to CCHA, please contact John Simons as soon as possible.

*The Harbison Project continued...*

In 1924, a tornado struck Pace's Mill and destroyed both mill and bridge, which was never rebuilt. Foundation stones and bridge pillars are still visible.

Samuel A. Otis, secretary of the Senate.

The fragile document is made of parchment. It is approximately 31 3/8 inches x 26 1/2 inches. After the document's recovery, the NC Department of Cultural Resources had it professionally conserved. When not on tour, the Bill of Rights will be stored in the North Carolina State Archives, one of the nation's oldest archives, in the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. The document will be stored in a special room where the temperature and humidity can be controlled.

*Liberty and Freedom* is presented by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, including the State Archives, twenty-seven historic sites, seven history museums, Historical Publications, Offices of Archaeology and Preservation, the State Library, including genealogy, the NC Arts Council, NC Museum of Art, and NC Symphony. Many programs relating to *History Happens Here* will be part of the department's programming.

## WHERE ARE YOU?

Please ensure we have your correct address, telephone number, and **EMAIL** address, at all times. Send a note by regular mail or to the email address on the first page of this publication, and we do the rest.

## CCHA 2007 EVENTS

### Museum Wednesdays

The CCHA Museum in the historic Chatham County Court House is open every Wednesday from 12:00PM to 3:00PM

### First Sundays

The CCHA Museum in the historic Chatham County Court House will be open from 1:00PM to 4:00PM the first Sunday of each month during 2007.

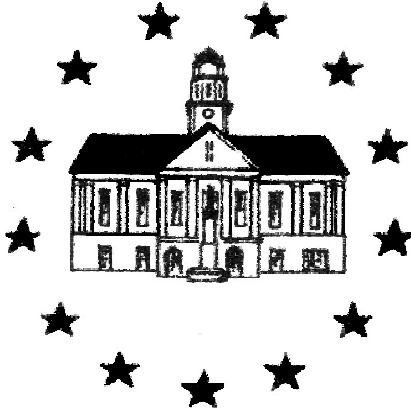
### CCHA Lecture Series

Plans are being considered for future lectures and presentations on the various facets of Chatham County History.

### NC BIBLE RECORDS

The North Carolina Genealogical Society has an ongoing project to collect and preserve Bible records originating in North Carolina. Further information may be found at their website.

**CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION, INC.**



**CCHA Newsletter**

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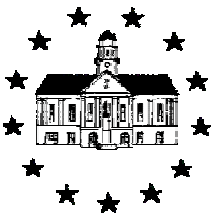
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