



CCHA Newsletter



Volume 20 — Issue 4

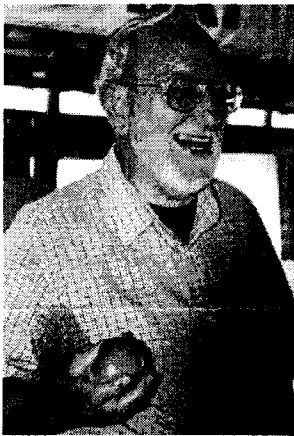
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Fourth Quarter 2008

APPLES - CHATHAM COUNTY AND BEYOND

If you missed the last installment of the CCHA Historic Lecture Series you missed a great time! The lecture was wonderful, the setting picturesque, the crowd was attentive, and the Apple Cooking Contest was **awesome!** We will have to do something like this again very soon.

The lecture by Lee Calhoun, the world-renowned apple historian, orchardist, and pomologist, was one of the most informa-



LEE CALHOUN

tive and interesting we have had, and Lee himself is a very personable fellow, readily mixing with the crowd to instruct, discuss the fine points of the lecture, and lend advice to budding amateur orchardists. The talk covered the history of the apple from its first cultivation through to today, noting the specific varieties actually first developed right here in Chatham County, NC.

The setting for this lecture was the so-called music barn on the G.T. Petty Memorial Grounds at the Silk Hope Farm Heritage Center in Silk Hope, NC. This was the perfect setting for this particular talk, lending a sense of true rural charm to the subject. The large crowd sat in rapt fascination as Lee expounded upon his favorite

subject through the afternoon.

The second big event of the day was the Apple Cooking Contest, and with well over forty entries, it was indeed quite a contest! The judging team of Milburn Gibbs, Bob Crowley, and Perry Harrison had a daunting task to sift through all those entries, sampling a bit of each one, but like the troopers they are, worked their way through mouthful after mouthful of tasty delights. They say it was a difficult decision.



APPLE COOKING CONTEST WINNERS

First prize of a weekend night at the Fearington House hotel went to Linda Aldred for her Apple Cake. Second and Third prizes of gift baskets from Southern Supreme in Bear Creek went to Edith Calhoun for her Washington Pie and Kirk McNaughton for his Fresh Apple Crisp Cake. Honorable Mention awards were also presented to Terry Aversano for her Waldorf Salad, Barbara Pugh for her Apple Cinnamon Jelly, Leela Ellis for her gluten-free Bynum Hill Apple Cake, and Ann Glosson for her Deep-Dish Apple Pie.

HENDERSON PLACE

The Henderson Place development takes its name from Lizzie Henderson. Part of the land belonged to her and part, in a roundabout way, from the Morphis family. Both parts seem to be connected to Mary Ruffin Smith of Jones Grove, whose grave is nearby. The 1880 census names Lizzie Henderson, 24, as a servant of Robert Cowan, newspaperman, of Pittsboro, and her children Laura and Thomas. Most in-

teresting, perhaps, is Lizzie's death certificate, filed in 1958. The person giving information is Nellie Toole of Durham, who did not know Lizzie's age but thought she might be 82. Her father's name was William Gray Toole but he mother was unknown. She had lived on a farm in Chatham County for 20 years and was buried in Durham. If the census data are correct, Lizzie would have been 102 years old.

DEVELOPERS SEEK HISTORICAL INFO

Preston Developers, managing the planning for Chatham Park, a large multifaceted development between Pittsboro and the Haw River, approached CCHA to ask for an overview of the historical background of their land, and we agreed to tackle the job to point out directions of future research. Of particular interest were reports of previously unknown cemeteries, a mill shown on Ramsey 1870 map of Chatham County, and traces of human occupation such as homestead foundations or chimneys and former roads. The preliminary conclusions of the task force members are the area probably mirrors the history of the county, as Native Americans exploited the creeks and gameland before 1750 without adopting agriculture or permanent settlements; colonists arrived to claim land and start farms to sustain their families; independence and population growth led to social organization, usually in churches and schools, through the mid-1800s; farming continued to be a primary occupation, with tobacco and cotton being the main cash crops, followed in the twentieth century by timber exploitation by larger and larger companies. History in the area is history of the "little guy" no generals or presidents but full of variety, drama, and accomplishment to be revealed to the diligent researcher.

FEDERATION OF NORTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

CCHA is a member of the Federation of North Carolina Historical Societies. They issue a quarterly newsletter. It comes to our mailbox and then is put in the magazine rack in the museum – therefore most of you never see it. The newsletter can be read online. The newsletter offers us an opportunity to see what other historical associations are doing, find out about workshops, and review a very good calendar of historical events across the state. The calendar might be helpful as you plan a long weekend or a special day trip. You might want to bookmark the site so that you can look at it on demand. The website is www.fnchs.org. Hope you find it helpful.

CCHA Lecture Series

Chatham USA

**Chatham History is American History
A New Perspective on Local Events**

Presented by:

Robert T. Barnes, III
Historian

**Sunday - 16 November 2008
2:30PM**

Admission is FREE

Light refreshments will be served following the presentation.

Chatham County Courthouse
“In the Circle”
12 East Street
Pittsboro, NC 27312

(The Chatham County Courthouse is located in the center of the traffic circle in the downtown historic district of Pittsboro, NC.)

History is a matter of perspective, and this new viewpoint for Chatham County will focus on how this area developed alongside the larger nation. Topics will include original colonization of the Eastern frontier, the growth of southern agriculture, the impact of trains and the industrial revolution, and the development of the 20th century. Major themes for the lecture will include Chatham's history of service, both military and community, the county's history of Religious freedom and tolerance, and the impact of Chatham residents outside county lines. Chatham, USA will demonstrate that Chatham County History is American History, and that nearly all major topics concerning the United States of America can be viewed through the local record.

Robert T. Barnes, III has a BA in Philosophy and Religion; Minors in History, Political Science, and Middle Eastern Studies; and a Master of the Arts in Liberal Arts, with a concentration in Global History

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Fall is one of my favorite seasons of the year. After summer heat and discomfort and bug and tick bites, the cool, crisp Fall days and beautiful leaf colors offer us a wonderful change of sights and senses. Events in the Fall always seem especially enjoyable. Festivities associated with Halloween are simply fun events without a lot of redeeming qualities except the fact that they are fun and simple. One of Chatham's most fun and simple Fall events for a number of years was the carved pumpkins on Chicken Bridge. The old wooden bridge was aglow with Jack O'Lanterns. The crowds of folks who came to the Bridge to walk and cherish the artistic carvings and the community spirit certainly provided expressions of gratitude to those neighborly souls who provided the creativity and work. What a wonderful gift that was for the whole community. This year perhaps a stroll down the walking bridge at Bynum would remind you of the Chicken Bridge pumpkins.

Street fairs, festivals, church suppers, and so many other things are reminiscent of Chatham County's historical neighborliness and community spirit. What could be much bigger than elections, especially during a presidential election year. For some of you who don't know what it was like to vote before ballots that worked in electronic counting machines, come on down to the Museum or our booth at the Pittsboro Street Fair as we have on loan an old ballot box from the Board of Elections for display, as well as some old historical ballots. You just might find our display and artifacts interesting.

In Memoriam

Mary Hayes Barber Holmes, whose manifold contributions to Chatham County are well-known, died after a battle with cancer in mid-August. Receiving less recognition were her efforts on behalf of the CCHA. Ms. Holmes was active in the early years of the organization. As a county commissioner, Ms. Holmes was instrumental in preserving the historic county courthouse as it was returned to its original exterior and modernized. Along with its elegant interior remodeling, she arranged for the dedication of a room for the Chatham Historical Museum.

“Over the years, Mary Hayes frequently stopped by with a snapshot, a letter, an object, to donate to the museum collection,” said Jane Pyle. “Even with her many interests, she kept aware of items that would help preserve the cultural heritage of the area.”

Siler City Hero Gets European Recognition

I would like to introduce you to a tall young man, born May 5, 1923. He was the youngest of nine children and dropped out of 10th grade to work on his aging parents' farm. He was an athlete, a pitcher on the American Legion baseball team for two years in Sanford, NC. He had blue eyes and light brown hair.

On February 11, 1943, he joined the Army at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He was sent to Camp Cooke, California and assigned to the 15th Tank Battalion of the 6th Armored Division as a medic and ambulance driver. Then he was sent to the war in Europe. He demonstrated his courage by making five heroic bridge crossings under withering fire to evacuate the wounded. A few days later, in his ambulance loaded with casualties, a mine exploded beneath him. He died at the age of 21 on November 24, 1944, not far from Metz, France.

He was Pvt. Thomas Edward Clark, after whom Clark Caserne, home of the 97th General Hospital, is named. He would have been 65 this year. We who serve cannot forget those who died that we might live in peace and freedom.

NEVER FORGET

Private Thomas E. Clark, a native of North Carolina, entered the Army on February 11, 1942. Trained as a medic, Private Clark was assigned to the 15th Tank Battalion, 6th Armored, and deployed to take part in the D-Day liberation of Nazi-controlled France. Six months later, fighting in the Rhineland, Private Clark braved extreme danger and finally sacrificed his life for his fellow soldiers. The Silver Star was awarded to him, the citation of which reads:

For gallantry in action in the vicinity of Nied Francaise River, Santry, France; Arraincourt, France; Remering, France; and Foret de Pattalange, France on 15 November 1944 and 24 November 1944. On five occasions on 15 November 1944, Private Clark crossed a bridge through a hail of enemy fire, and evacuated wounded soldiers who had fallen while attempting to establish a bridge-head. On 24 November 1944, he entered an area of "no man's land" deep in a woods to evacuate casualties. Although knowing the area was heavily defended by the enemy and mined heavily, he drove his vehicle into the woods and then traveled on foot to evacuate the wounded. After administering life-saving first aid, he carried the men to his vehicle. On leaving the area, his vehicle struck a mine and Private Clark was killed. The wounded men, however, were saved, despite the mine explosion, and later evacuated to an aid station. His courageous action cost him his life but saved the lives of the men he evacuated and is in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Medical Corps.

On 29 July, 1947, General Lucius Clay issued orders naming the area occupied by the 97th General Hospital "Clark Caserne" in fitting honor of the brave and compassionate soldier and medic, Thomas E. Clark.

Limey, France. As to be expected, he received a Purple Heart Medal, but also of significance, he was awarded a Silver Star. On 29 July, 1947, General Lucius Clay issued orders naming the area occupied by the 97th General Hospital in Frankfurt, Germany *Clark Caserne* in his honor. The hospital was captured from the German Air

Force (Luftwaffe) by the US Army in 1945. This later became a regional Army Regional Medical Center, later an Air Force medical facility and currently is the home of the US Consulate General Frankfurt.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Bertin L. Samsa for F A R M C Facts, Vol. 2, No. 20, May 18, 1988.

Private Thomas Edward Clark was a Chatham native, the youngest son of Eli and Daisy Clark of Route 1, Siler City. A memorial service was held at Pleasant Hill Methodist Church near Pittsboro May 20, 1945.

Edward, as his family called him, was buried in the US Military Cemetery,

In 1988, Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Bertin L. Samsa while at Frankfurt Army Regional Medical Center became interested in the history of naming of the hospital grounds *Clark Caserne* and the person for whom it was named. His research and efforts led to a painting and a memorial plaque 40 years later to revive this young soldiers memory to inspire young medics. The memorial plaque is inset here.

In September 1948, Private Clark's remains were being shipped back to Chatham County. His father, Eli A. Clark, died at his home near Siler City on 15 September 1948. Edward's remains arrived in Pittsboro on 16 September 1948 and joint funeral rites were held for them on 17 September 1948. Interment was in the Pleasant Hill Methodist Church cemetery.

My appreciation is extended to Father Bertin Samsa, retired and living in Wisconsin, Henry Clark, brother of Edward, and Mary Bridges, niece. These family members had the precious family records to assist in putting this story together after the military records were destroyed in the well-known fire in St. Louis, MO.

CCHA 2008 EVENTS

Museum Wednesdays

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

First Sundays

The CCHA Chatham County Museum of history in the historic Chatham County Court House will be open from 1:00PM to 4:00PM the first Sunday of the month, April through November.

CCHA Historic Lecture Series

Lectures and presentations on various facets and subjects of Chatham County history are scheduled for:

Sunday, 16 November 2008

All will begin at 2:30PM on these dates, and light refreshments will be served following the presentations.

What's in Your Attic?

A recent meeting of the CCHA Board discussed the idea of inventorying items of historical interest in the personal collections and possession of folks interested in Chatham history. We hope people will tell us about artifacts they own and treasure. We are not in a position to be a repository for such items, but would like to know about them and be able to call upon the owners to use them as enhancements for programs and museum displays. In some instances, we might be able to help owners save them and their historical significance. Each succeeding generation seems to see less value in the old dusty articles found in the attic or basement. They might still be treasures to some folks if we knew about them. Please give thought to what you may have around your home and family and let us know. Please contact anyone on the Board to talk about it.

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ASSOCIATION, INC.



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