



# Chatham County Historical Association, Inc.

## A Special Edition of the CCHA Newsletter Chatham Historical Museum at the Historic 1881 Courthouse

May 19, 2013

### From ashes to fruition and the headlines read . . .

March 25, 2010: *Chatham County Courthouse fire*

March 31, 2010: *Chatham Commissioners voted to rebuild courthouse*

June 8, 2010: *Chatham Commissioners form task force to make recommendations on rebuilding the Court House*

November 2, 2010: *Chatham Commissioners gave approval to the CCHA to design a museum*

January 2011: *CCHA Board moves forward with planning a CCHA Historic Museum*

October 4, 2011: *Chatham Commissioners picks firm to rebuild courthouse*

April 20, 2013: *Historic Chatham County courthouse reopens and the CCHA opened its doors to a new museum where the county's history can be traced.*

At the reopening of the 1881 Court House event on April 20, 2013, Barbara Pugh, president of the Historical Association, said "We are confident that visitors will enjoy the new museum, while also learning a great deal and gaining a renewed pride about our county's rich history. We are excited to have a museum that Chatham's school children can visit, but it is a place where anyone of any generation can learn more about this unique place we call home." The courtroom located on the second floor was filled to capacity with elected officials and dignitaries from across Chatham County,

It was a dream come to fruition for the CCHA which had worked many long hours to salvage the contents of the small room in the southwest corner of the courthouse where the Association called home and opened its doors to visitors each Wednesday afternoon.



"Chatham County Historical Association" stated the sign on the door several days after the devastating fire. Most of the contents were still intact but seriously damaged by water during the fire.

To all our friends and supporters:

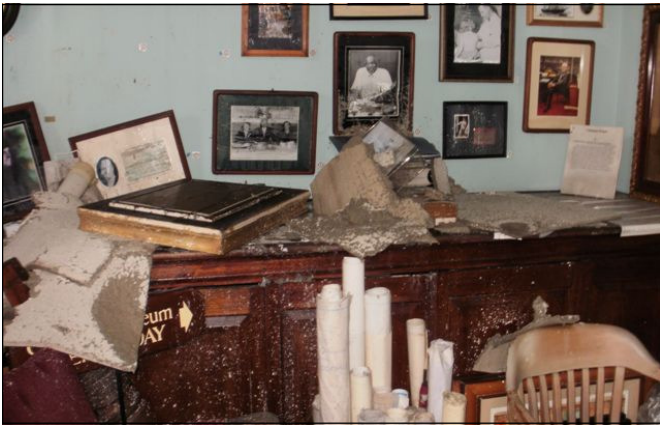
We've done it! The Chatham Historical Museum is a reality. It's due to the faith, support, and work of many people who believed that the history of the people of Chatham was important to save and to learn about Chatham County.

You are those people who made it possible. It was my pleasure to work for you.

I'm proud of our museum, and I trust you are as well. I'm also proud of our history.

Barbara Clark Pugh, President  
Chatham County Historical Association

May 19, 2013



Members of the CCHA were permitted to enter their old space to view the damage three days after the fire. Falling debris and water damage were the main causes of the damage to the room.



By January 19, 2011, the Historical Association had begun to make its plans for the “new” home that was to be called the museum. The exhibit planning group, Design Dimensions and Grim Hobbs of Hobbs Architects, the architecture for the reconstruction met to discuss design.



On April 17, 2013, the CCHA board members viewed the results of months of work and planning. Installation was underway by Design Dimensions as they tried to meet the open house deadline for installing all the components of the exhibit room.



After months of delay, Design Dimensions started installing the display cases for the hall in early April, 2013.

## Susan Little—special recognition

In summer of 2010, the commissioners appointed a task force to oversee the process of restoring the Historic Courthouse. After the task force make their recommendations and the commissioners allocated space in the courthouse to develop a museum through the CCHA, an Exhibit Committee was selected with Susan Little as chairperson to oversee the development of the museum because of her previous experience.

Susan took on this task with enthusiasm to make the museum a wonderful place to showcase the history of Chatham County. This was an arduous process. Design Dimensions was selected to develop the display but time and effort was demanded to plan, select items, photographs, and plan a story line based upon acceptable standards for a museum. Work started in the winter of 2010 and continued through the spring of 2013. This was a time-consuming process and Susan guided the committee and the CCHA Board through this undertaking by keeping the group focused on meeting the deadlines imposed upon this committee.

The CCHA Board is appreciative of her leadership and guidance. Special thanks go to her commitment to tell the wonderful story and history of Chatham County.



## Grand Reopening of the 1881 Chatham County Courthouse, Saturday, April 20, 2013



### CCHA Exhibit Committee

Susan Little, Chairman

Kenneth Crabtree

Ernest Dark

W. Jane Hinnant

Kay Judge

Dan Perry

Barbara Pugh

Jane Pyle

Patty Walters

Early contributors: Shirley Edwards, Walter Harris, and Mimi Pollard



## Tribute to Barbara Pugh, President of CCHA

Barbara Pugh took over the presidency of the CCHA in 2007, and without her leadership and guidance, the Association would not be where it is today. In 2007, the collections of the Association were scattered. Items were stored in various locations and there was no centralized database of memorabilia. Since that time, the Association has become more focused, items are stored in one central location, and the process of creating a database is in process.

Coordinating and keeping volunteers on task is not an easy job, but Barbara has taken the task to heart and under her leadership, the CCHA has become a functioning entity focused on preserving the history of Chatham County. The time and energy that Barbara has devoted to this task is a full-time job. She has graciously given what it takes to bring together a diverse group of volunteers to stay focused on the mission on the CCHA.

Added to this task was the devastating courthouse fire that damaged the office and showroom of the CCHA's items. The average person would have looked at the disarray and damaged items and probably thought this is hopeless but not Barbara. She rolled up her sleeve and supervised and helped sort and dry the many items that were located in the damaged office/showroom of the CCHA. She spent the time and effort to locate specialists to assist in the process.

Barbara stayed in close touch with the county commissioners as they proceeded through the lengthy process of making the decisions to rebuild the courthouse and determining what was to be housed in the courthouse. When Barbara and the CCHA were notified that much of the downstairs area of the new courthouse would be assigned to the CCHA for office space and a museum, it was a day of celebration for Barbara and the CCHA board. Finally, a place to house and showcase Chatham County's history. The process of developing the museum and raising the funds to complete this process was a laborious task.



Barbara Clark Pugh, President of the Chatham County Historical Association.

### A special thank you to the CCHA board members for their service, 2010-2013

Rob Barnes	Jane Hinnant
Rae Bland	Kay Judge
Robert Britson	Dan Perry
Candace Burke	Barbara Perry
Edith Calhoun	Judith Peterson
Joyce Cotten	Barbara Pugh
Kenneth Crabtree	Jane Pyle
Bill Dow	Lee Sullivan
Tommy Emerson	Fred Vatter
Walter Harris	Beverly Wiggins

### Volunteers needed

The lifeblood of the new museum will be in its volunteer corps. **What role would you like to play as the museum opens its doors to visitors from far and wide?** What do you enjoy doing and how can we tap into that joy on behalf of the museum?

Immediate needs are for volunteers both men and women to:

Work with 4 <sup>th</sup> graders	Story tellers
Greeters	Event planners
Docent/guides	Publicity packets
Staff the office	Social events
Assist the curator	

For further information on volunteering, visit the website [www.chathamhistory.org](http://www.chathamhistory.org) or Susan Little at [sslittle@bellsouth.net](mailto:sslittle@bellsouth.net); 919-929-7707 or Patty Walters at [pattywalters@gmail.com](mailto:pattywalters@gmail.com); 919-742-2166