



# The Link



*preserving our heritage and building a future together*

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## **Sabine Hill: Upper East Tennessee Gets New State Historic Site**



*Sabine Hill in its restored beauty (photo by Anne G'Fellers-Mason)*

**Tennessee gained its seventeenth State Historic Site** on November 1 when Sabine Hill in Elizabethton was formally dedicated after five years of restoration. It is the fifth State Historic Site in NE Tennessee.

Sabine Hill was built by Brigadier General Nathaniel Taylor and his wife Mary between 1814 and 1818, after the General's return from the War of 1812. The Taylors were among the earliest settlers in Elizabethton. Nathaniel Taylor was also the first sheriff of Carter County. He later served in the State Assembly. The Taylors' grandsons, Bob and Alf Taylor, also both served as Governor for Tennessee.

The home is a Federal style I-house plan, with clapboards covering adzed log walls, over a locally quarried limestone foundation.

Unfortunately, General Taylor died in 1816, and did not live to see the house completed, but his family moved in about 1818 and wife Mary lived here until her death in 1853.

The house was threatened with demolition in 2007 when the five acre parcel was purchased by a developer who planned to remove the house and build condominiums. However, the city refused to change zoning for the tract and it was

purchased by local preservationists, James and former HA Board Member Helen Wilson and Sam LaPorte, who held the property until the State of Tennessee could acquire it.

While exhibits have been installed and most work on the structure completed, Site Manager Jennifer Bauer reports there are still period appropriate furnishings to add that will complete the restoration efforts.

If you would like to take a tour of Sabine Hill, contact Sycamore Shoals State Historic Park at (423) 543-5808.



## "A Spot on the Hill" Completes its 2017 Season



"A Spot on the Hill" completed its fourth successful season last month. Many thanks to writer and director Anne G'Fellers-Mason, co-director Gordon Edwards, and the talented, all volunteer cast for a successful run with four, sell-out shows.

There are many stories to be told and secrets to be uncovered in the Rocky Hill and College Hill Cemeteries, so we look forward to more stories and mysteries to be unveiled in 2018.

Cast from left to right, Katie Rosolowski, Stefanie Murphy, Anne G'Fellers-Mason, Kyle Mason, Anna VanEaton, Joel VanEaton, Kellie Reeves, Jerry Muelver, Kaye Gonel, and Gordon Edwards.

## Dental Artifacts Donated to the Heritage Alliance

A dental chair and instrument cabinet belonging to longtime Jonesborough dentist Dr. George Byrd have been donated to the Heritage Alliance by his daughter Georgie Snapp.

Dr. Byrd was born in 1906 and died in Jonesborough in 1992 at the age of 86. He operated a dental office at three different locations on Main Street over his 50 year dental career - he started in practice with Dr. February upstairs in the building that now houses Mauks, then moved to the upstairs of what is now the Main St Café (it was the Post Office then), and finally upstairs in the building that now houses The Lollipop Shop.

Dr. Byrd was described by friend and local storyteller Linda Poland as quite a character - he always wore straw hats in summer and

fedoras in winter.

Other artifacts from Dr. Byrd's practice are already in the Heritage Alliance's collection. These items will be used to create an exhibit about Dr. Byrd and early dentistry, which is planned to be installed in the Jonesborough/ Washington County History Museum located inside the Visitors' Center sometime in 2018.

*Dr. Byrd's cast iron dental chair, the chair was originally used by Dr. February.*





## Maple Hill Farmhouse: Artifacts Tell their Tales

*Two Archaeologists buy an old farmhouse, and find many artifacts from its past...*

Thousands of years before Europeans came to this area, Native Americans camped on a hill overlooking the Nolichucky River, leaving behind fragments of their stone tools.

About 1807 Isaac Wilson Jr. and his family settled here. When the original 1830's brick Federal house built by the Wilsons was damaged by fire, the farm's 1910 owners, Silas and Ida Shanks, built the sturdy brick Foursquare.

Fast forward to 2014: archaeologists Bob and Mary Noel bought the property and started some much-needed repairs to the main house (the older Federal era house awaits restoration). During work on the



*Maple Hill Farmhouse, built in 1910.*

house and grounds, a wide variety of items have been recovered that had been lost or discarded by previous residents.

The house was built on a thick concrete foundation over a tall crawlspace. For much of its history, a large portion of the crawlspace was not accessible and became a time capsule for discarded items. Landscaping around the house has also turned up prehistoric items as well as coins, ceramics and glass fragments.

Discoveries have included a dozen prehistoric stone tool fragments and the base of an Archaic era projectile point (at least 8,000 years old). Historic artifacts found include many early 20th century bottles, ceramic fragments of plates and bowls from the early 19th to mid 20th century, and a complete workman's crock from the time the house was under construction.

Of particular interest have been the children's artifacts - shoes, boots, a nursery rhyme metal cup

and other toys.

More items are expected to be discovered as work continues on the house and grounds - a window into the past.



*Bottles found in the crawlspace or excavated from the yard*



*A child's cowboy boot, cap gun and marbles recovered from the yard and crawlspace*



## Chuckey Depot Dedicated, Now Open to the Public

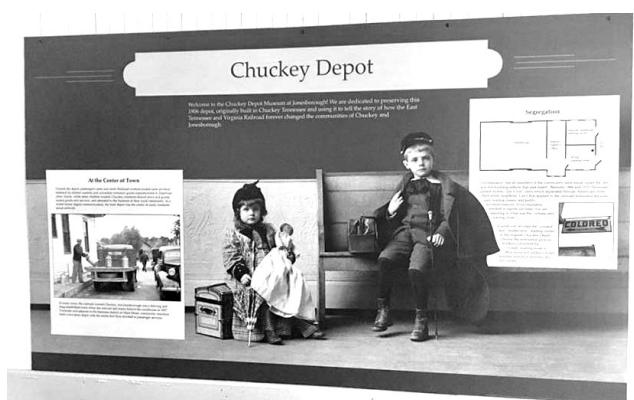
Jonesborough's newest interpretive site, the Chuckey Train Depot, was dedicated and opened to the public on October 2. More than 100 supporters were on hand to see the completion of this vision, a partnership between the Heritage Alliance, the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society, and the Town of Jonesborough.



*A sample of Chuckey Depot exhibits and artifacts*

Interior exhibits in the depot include the history of the Chuckey Depot, its journey to Jonesborough, stories of its passengers, and authentic railroad artifacts.

The Chuckey Depot is open for visitors from Wednesday through Saturday, 1 till 5 pm.



## Exhibit Updates

**The Rhea Wells exhibit** runs from January 26 through February 23, 2018 at the McKinney Center. There will be an opening reception/exhibit talk on January 26, and a literary panel of local educators & librarians on Friday, February 16.



*Rhea Wells' Illustration*

**The Chester Inn Museum's** current exhibit (running through December) is "Cemeteries, Funerals, and Remembering the Dead." It looks at the customs and practices of dying and memorialization in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Part of the exhibit focuses on cemeteries and features artifacts found in the Old Jonesborough cemetery. There is also information on grave houses, including a grave site in Unicoi County. The exhibit also examines death commemoration including funerals, processions, decorating graves, and memorial objects. It includes the death mask of infant Beckie Bean and a drawing of 2 year old James Deaderick's coffin. The exhibit includes an accompanying pamphlet with extra information.



*Grave Topper from Rocky Hill Cemetery.*



## Volunteer Spotlight: Ed and Karin Dembowczyk



*Ed and Karin Dembowczyk*

Ed and Karin have lived in Jonesborough for six years. Karin has helped out with many special events throughout the year, including the Progressive Dinner and Jonesborough Days and at the

Chester Inn. Ed is one of our newest town tour guides.

When not helping out the HA, Karin works at a dental office, while Ed works for the VA Hospital in Johnson City.

When asked why they enjoy helping out with the Heritage Alliance, Karin says, "I love the atmosphere they create for volunteers - we've become like a family. It's a way to give back to the community." Ed says, "I like giving town tours because I enjoy sharing the local history, and making people laugh."

Their other activities include enjoying a new grandbaby, and Ed recently published a book about their rescue dog, Carlos. The book, *Forever Home*, is available at the Storytelling Center gift shop. He writes under the pen name Anthony Lynne.

## A New Face on Heritage Alliance Staff

Jacob Simpson is the newest employee at the Heritage Alliance. He and his wife, Emily, moved to Johnson City from Raleigh earlier this year so she can pursue a Master's degree in Paleontology at East Tennessee State University.

A native of Mt Airy, NC, Jacob graduated with a History degree from NC State, and has worked in the museum field since 2010, most recently for the Mordecai Historic Park in Raleigh. His expertise is in interpretation, research, collections and exhibits. At the HA, Jacob will be serving as a tour guide, and working on exhibits and collections.



*Jacob Simpson*

**Don't Forget**

**Heritage Alliance  
Annual Meeting!!**

**Feb. 1 at 6:30**

**Jonesborough  
Visitor's Center**





## MEMBERS GET A DISCOUNT FOR COMBO, TOUR/DINNER TICKETS!

**Get your tickets Now!**

**Saturday, December 2**

**Tour Eight Historic Structures  
from 3:00-7:00**

**Storytellers, Musicians, & More**

**Elegant Four Course Meal, seating  
times at 4:00 & 7:00**

**Make reservations by calling 423-  
753-1010, or 423-753-9580.**



### **Calendar of Events**

- **Chester Inn Museum** open Mon, Fri-Sat from 11-6 and Sun from 1-5 through late December
- **Town Tours** at 1:00 on Mon, Fri, Sat through late Dec, **Mythbusting Tour** at 1:00 on December 2
- **November 25: Small Business Saturday**, Chester Inn open from 10-6 with free town tours from 11-3 at the top of every hour, Mother Goose in parlor at 11:30 & 1:30
- **December 14: Student Film Night**, 6:00 at McKinney Center. Come and see the local, history-based films the students made in Movie Makers Camp this summer!
- **December 18: 1:30 at Jonesborough Senior Center**, History of Christmas Traditions
- **Far Away and Close to Home: The Art and Words of Author/Illustrator Rhea Wells' Exhibit** at the McKinney Center, Jan 26-Feb 23. Opening reception/exhibit talk on January 26.
- **February 1: Annual Meeting** at 6:30 at Jonesborough Visitor's Center.

### **Please Frequent Our Business Members as They Help Support Our Region's History:**

#### **Franklin House Bed & Breakfast**

116 Franklin Avenue  
Jonesborough, TN 37659  
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[www.franklinhousebb.com](http://www.franklinhousebb.com)

**Main Street Café  
and Catering**  
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[www.gracemeadowsfarm.tn.com/](http://www.gracemeadowsfarm.tn.com/)

**SonGear: A Christian  
Lifestyle Company**  
Jack Van Zandt,  
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423.948.0237  
[www.songear.com](http://www.songear.com)

**Jonesborough  
Genealogical Society**  
c/o Washington County Library  
200 Sabin Drive  
Jonesborough, TN 37659  
<http://jgstn.wordpress.com/>



*We have a guest article from Gordon Edwards on his continuing detective work at Rocky Hill Cemetery.*

How important and informative photographs can be – a couple of Rocky Hill mysteries solved.

**Mystery #1** - The upper photo was taken on Dec 2, 1900 - the grave of John Lynn Lampson covered with flowers. He had died a few days before on Nov 29th. The top piece on John Leonard & Martha Lynn Lampson's (John Lynn Lampson's parents) large marker is presently missing. It had been found some years ago, but the exact original location was unknown, although suspected. Following standard preservation protocol, unless locations are proven, portions of artifacts are not placed so that they appear in a correct, albeit unproven location. The top piece has been in storage for some time, and is occasionally used as a display item at the Chester Inn Museum (see photo of grave finial on page 4). This photograph has confirmed the proper location for this piece. Restoration can now be evaluated.

**Mystery #2** - There is a marker on the left in the old photo which is no longer there. A high resolution scan of the old photo allowed me to read that marker - Infant of R.N. (Robert Newton) and N.F. (Nellie Fain) Dosser - died Nov 6, 1890. At some unknown date, the grave of the infant

was moved to the Robert N. Dosser plot - the marker is now in the Dosser terrace behind the old Farm Bureau building. Robert was the son of James H. & Fannie W. Dosser. Nellie was the daughter of John H. & Fannie Rhea Fain. The Dosser terrace was not added to Rocky Hill until 1899. The infant had been originally buried in the Lampson/Fain plot, then moved to be in the parents' plot. The large Fain marker is just off to the right of both photos. This old photo may yield additional information after further study.

Old hardcopy photographs have largely given way to the digital age. An age in which data is now recorded, but often not held in one's hand, studied, evaluated, and restudied. It often takes a combination of techniques to arrive at an answer – sorting through clues, both physical and clues held in someone's mind. As we embrace new practices, it is important not to completely lose sight of or discard old techniques, including “gut feelings.” Preservation is a journey, not an end.

## From the Director's Desk



*Lampson Gravestone, 1900.*



*Lampson Gravestone, 2017.*

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*Preserving the architectural, historical, and cultural  
resources of our region and providing heritage ed-  
ucational experiences for a wide range of audiences.*

Giving Opportunities: THANK YOU  
for your commitment to preserving our  
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Memberships and donations to the Heritage Alliance are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. If you have questions concerning your contribution to the Alliance, please consult your tax advisor. No goods and/or services have been provided to the donor by the Heritage Alliance in consideration of this donation and membership.

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