



The Link



preserving our heritage and building a future together

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Spring 2017

Heritage Alliance Receives Grant from Humanities Tennessee

The Heritage Alliance has just been awarded a grant by Humanities Tennessee to create the exhibit, "Far Away and Close to Home: The Art and Words of Author/Illustrator Rhea Wells." The project is a partnership with the McKinney Center who will host the exhibit. It will be co-curated with help from the Reece Museum at ETSU.

Rhea Wells (1891-1962) was a native of Jonesborough who is best remembered as an author and illustrator of children's books published in the early twentieth century when the field was first developing. His titles include *Zeke the Raccoon*, *An American Farm*, *Beppo the Donkey*, and *Allie the Camel*, to name a few.

The McKinney Center, Mary B. Martin Program for the Arts, and the Washington County Public Library will be working with the Heritage Alliance to also develop a series of art and literature workshops and



A Rhea Wells' illustration from his book Peppi the Duck

discussions relating to the exhibit for both children and adults.

Wells' early life in Washington County influenced his books, along with his extensive travels to Europe and Africa. Wells was a passionate advocate for art and literature, and he endowed the Jonesborough library upon his death. The exhibit and its programs will take place in early 2018. Stay tuned for further details!

Murder Mystery!

One body in a river, another in a barrel. Who's to blame? Is this a murder/suicide, or a double murder? Find out on **August 25** and **August 26** as the Heritage Alliance presents an original murder mystery event at the historic Eureka Inn. Stay tuned for more details!

We Need Your Help!

Jonesborough Days is coming up this June 30 - July 2. This is one of the busiest times for visits to the Chester Inn, and additional volunteers are needed to help with programming that weekend.

We are looking for help in the Chester Inn, and for help with our kids' activities in Discovery Park, including an outdoor Oak Hill School, old timey games, and more.

With our expanding schedule, the Heritage Alliance is also in need of people willing to be guides for the downtown walking tours. Training and support will be available if you're interested in sharing our special town history with visitors.



World War I Exhibit at History Museum



World War I decorative medal from the Museum's collection

To honor this year's centennial of the United States' entry into World War I, an exhibit of military artifacts are on display at the Jonesborough & Washington County History Museum. The exhibit will debut over Memorial Day Weekend.

5,963 Washington County men registered for the draft, but only 1,168 ever wore a uniform. 569 actually served overseas. Fifty-six men from

Jonesborough served, and 19 of them died in battle or from disease. The exhibit will share quotes from letters sent home to anxious families, as well as articles from the *Herald & Tribune* that covered issues on the home front, such as rationing and the Sedition Act which outlawed criticism of the United States government. The exhibit will also cover the flu pandemic of 1918 and its impact on Washington County.

History Happy Hour Offers New Programs

The Chester Inn's new program, "History Happy Hour" got off to a great start on March 23 when more than 40 people gathered to hear about the life of First Lady Eliza Johnson. The following Happy Hour presentations are scheduled for the coming months - all with a start time of 6:30. Programs are held in the Chester Inn State Historic Site and Museum.

- June 22: Marlin Curnutt of Walters State History Department will speak about Jackie Robinson and his role as spark for the Civil Rights Movement.
- July 20: Dr. Colin Baxter, Professor emeritus of East Tennessee State University, will speak about James Baxter Bean, a descendant of Tennessee's first

permanent settler of European origin, and famed Civil War physician. The Heritage Alliance will also unveil a very unique new artifact in the Heritage Alliance's collection that is related to the Bean family.

- August 10: Blaine Schubert, with the East Tennessee State University Geosciences Department/Gray Fossil Site at ETSU, will speak about the natural history of the East Tennessee region.



Washington County Archives - What's Inside?

The Washington County Archives are now open for business in their new home, the former First National Bank Building at 103 West Main Street. Over the next few newsletters, we'll offer some interesting examples of the information they have available.

Wills are one type of document included in the archive. These take many different forms, from formal documents drafted by an attorney, to hand-written on cardboard or even the back of a calendar. One of the most interesting (see photo) is on a piece of paper the size of a playing card, the will of Lula Baxter, written in 1934.

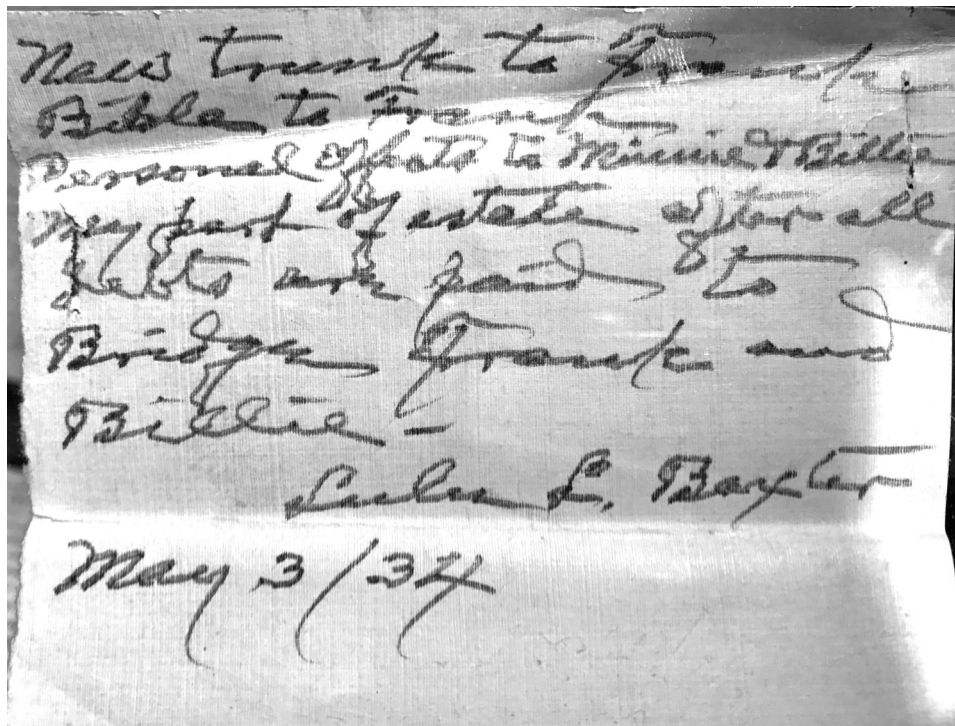
Documents in the archives are historic records of Washington County. Some were created by the State of Franklin, and a few even date back to British rule. These include:

Court Records: from Chancery Court, Superior Court, Circuit Court, and County Court (case files, docket books and minutes) 1777 up to 2009,
Deeds: 1997-present,
Election Records: 1832-1949,
Estate Inventories: 1778-2006,
Justice of the Peace Records: 1779-1963, **Marriage Records:** 1787-1990,
Tax Books: 1778-2005,
Wills: 1779-1959

Archivist Ned Irwin and Archives Assistant Donna Cox Briggs are pleased by the number of people who have signed up to volunteer. Opportunities still exist to assist visitors and in archiving materials. If you're interested in helping, call at 423-753-0393, or email Ned at nirwin@washingtoncountyttn.org.



*First National Bank Building,
now the Washington County
Archives*



Lula Baxter's will from 1934 - reprinted at about actual size.



Heritage Alliance Wins Four Awards for Original Programs

Two Heritage Alliance original, historical programs from 2016 have received awards over the last couple of months. *A Spot on the Hill*, a program presented in the fall at the Old Jonesborough Cemetery received an “Award of Commendation” from the state wide Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM) and an “Award of Excellence” from the East Tennessee Historical Society (ETHS). “Not Your Ordinary Dinner Party,” a summer fundraiser, received an “Award of Excellence” from TAM and a “Community History Award” from ETHS.

Both programs were written by Heritage Alliance staff member



and playwright Anne G'Fellers-Mason, and were preformed by a cast and crew of local participants.

Anne G'Fellers-Mason accepts awards from Ken Mayes, President of the Tennessee Association of Museums



Gordon Edwards prepares for a tour

Graveyard Tours Set to Resume for 2017

Tours of Rocky Hill and College Hill, Jonesborough's historic cemeteries, will resume on Memorial Day weekend. The tours will be offered every Saturday at 2:30. Tickets may be purchased at the Chester Inn Museum. The cost for a tour is \$3, although those who want to attend the cemetery tour and another tour option may buy a combo ticket for \$7.

Burials at Rocky Hill cemetery are believed to date back to the turn of the 18th century. Many of Jonesborough's most colorful historical figures are buried there.

The cemetery was regularly used for burials through the early 1900s. College Hill Cemetery was chartered in 1890 by the Colored Peoples Cemetery Society.

Most tours are given by “Graveyard” Gordon Edwards, who has done extensive research and spearheaded a significant amount of restoration work on the cemeteries and their markers. On some tours this year, he will be joined by other “characters” who will portray individuals found in the cemetery.



Volunteer Spotlight: Janice Hammett

It has taken a while to shine our spotlight on one of the Heritage Alliance's most long-time volunteers, but worth the wait. Janice Hammett's support of historic preservation in Jonesborough precedes the Heritage Alliance, dating back to the Civic Trust, the town's first historic preservation organization.

"I grew up in Jonesborough," says Janice, "back when there were no traffic lights. After college, I returned to become a librarian at the city library when it was located in the Chester Inn." The town library was in the Chester Inn from the 1960's to the late 1980's. Back then there was an elevated brick planter across the front sidewalk of the Chester Inn that contained a flower garden. The far end of the basement floor was the children's book area.

In the late 1980's she and her family moved to Morganton, North Carolina, for about a decade, returning to the Jonesborough area in 1998. Until her retirement, she was a librarian at the Johnson City Library. Now she has come full circle and is back again at the Chester Inn as a docent, answering visitor's questions.

When asked about the biggest changes she has seen in Jonesborough during the years, she points out the local leaders who were visionaries by choosing to save and preserve the historic downtown buildings, and in the 1970's, to bury all the utility lines in order to bring back even more historic character to the town. During her years as a librarian there were not nearly as many tourists as today - that the



Janice Hammett in front of the Chester Inn

continued growth of the Storytelling Festival has really brought people into town.

Reflecting upon her job as a docent, Janice says, "I didn't have to study the history of the Chester Inn because I lived it." We all enjoy that she shares that history with us.



Joel VanEaton "mythbusting" in downtown Jonesborough

Summer Tour Schedule with New Options

The Heritage Alliance's historic Jonesborough walking tours resumed in March, and by May, will be offered on the full summer schedule.

Tours will be held at 1:00 on Monday, Friday and Saturday. Sunday tours will begin at 2:00, and Thursday evening tours will begin at 7:00, starting June 1st.

Several new options will be available for 2017. The first Saturday of every month is a

Mythbusting Tour, where participants will try and guess which tales are false and which are true and stranger than fiction. Friday and Saturday tours usually will include a guided tour of the interior of the Eureka Inn.

Finally, every other Friday of each month, beginning in July, we will feature a new Railroad themed tour that will end at the newly renovated Chucky Depot. Tours are \$5 and begin at the Chester Inn, please come and join us!



Student Intern at HA for the Summer

Alexander Rolison is the new Heritage Alliance intern for the summer. Alex is a native of Pilot Hill, North Carolina and is a rising senior at Tusculum College, majoring in Museum Studies.

Alex came to know about the Heritage Alliance when his museum studies class helped to archive papers from the Telford Manufacturing Company, and to organize materials for the Chucky Depot.

While at the Heritage Alliance, Alex will be doing a variety of projects including archival work, and exhibit design for the new museum at the Chucky Depot. Please come by and welcome Alex!



Alex Rolison, HA Summer Intern

Calendar of Events

- **Chester Inn Museum** open Mon, Wed-Sat from 11-6 and Sun from 1-5
- **Town Tours** at 1:00 on Mon, Fri, Sat and 2:00 on Sun, **Mythbusting Tour** at 1:00 on June 3, July 1, Aug 5, Sept 2, **Old Jonesborough Cemetery Tour** at 2:30 every Saturday May 27-Oct
- **Architectural Salvage Warehouse** open from 8-12 on June 3 & 17, July 1 & 15, Aug 5 & 19, Sept 2 & 16
- **History Happy Hour** at 6:30 on June 22, July 20, Aug 10, & Sept 21
- **Heritage Alliance at Senior Center** at 1:30 June 19, July 17, Aug 21, Sept 18

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Jonesborough, TN 37659
423-753-3819
www.franklinhousebb.com

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Jonesborough, TN
423-753-2460
www.mainstreetcatering.net

SonGear: A Christian
Lifestyle Company
Jack Van Zandt, Customer
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423.948.0237
www.songear.com

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





From the Director's Desk

Set your clocks and mark your calendars! The Chuckey Depot Rail Road Museum at Jonesborough is officially opening at 11AM on Thursday June 29th, just in time for Jonesborough Days!

This multi-year effort is a collaboration between the Town of Jonesborough, the Heritage Alliance and the Watauga Valley Historical Railroad Society. A great deal of time and effort has gone into the restoration of this building and its adaptive reuse as a museum. Whether your interest is in old buildings, specific railroad memorabilia or the ways in which railroads changed communities, there is something here for everyone.

The Town really deserves our congratulations and sincere

thanks for all the heavy lifting they contributed to this project. It hasn't been simple (few things are) but we hope you will be proud of your new museum!

The Heritage Alliance will begin offering a special railroad tour to coincide with the opening of the depot. Like all our tours, it will begin at the Chester, but unlike

our other tours, it will head west to the depot. After Jonesborough Days, our railroad tour will happen on the first Friday of every month at 1 pm. During Jonesborough Days, we will feature all of our tours at different times through the weekend. Be sure to check your Jonesborough Days program for tour times and topics!



Chucky Depot in its new Jonesborough home

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Bed & Breakfast
142 Matthew Mills Road
Telford, TN
423.913.3812
www.embreefarm.com

Herald & Tribune
702 West Jackson Blvd
Jonesborough, TN
423-753-3136
www.heraldandtribune.com

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125 E Main St
Jonesborough, TN
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212 East Sabin Dr.
Jonesborough, TN 37659

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Oak Hill School: Marjorie Shaefer and
Deanna Carey



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

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for your commitment to preserving our
heritage and building a future together!

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