



# The Link



*preserving our heritage and building a future together*

Volume 13, Number 4

Fall 2014

## **“A Spot On the Hill” — Original Play Shares History Amongst the Tombstones, Raises Money for Tombstone Restoration**

This fall, the Heritage Alliance was proud to present “A Spot On the Hill,” a one act play that shared the stories of some of Jonesborough’s most prominent residents now interred in the Old Jonesborough Cemetery at the top of East Main Street. The play took place in the cemetery and audience members walked amongst the tombstones, traveling from marker to marker to hear the stories of the people buried there. The event took place over the course of October and the first of November. Despite this being the third wettest October on record in the area, most of the shows were sold out and over 150 people visited the Old Jonesborough Cemetery, many of them for the first time. “I didn’t even know this was up here,” was a common refrain.

The cast of nine portrayed multiple people, including Fire Chief Guy Sabin who brought the first firefighting equipment to town in 1888, Catherine Emmerson who ran a subscription school for young girls, businessman and Confederate Brigadier General A.E. Jackson, and First Lieutenant Alfred Martin Ray who was born a slave and went on to serve his country for 30 years in the United States Army. Information for the play was researched and gathered from the Jonesborough/Washington County Archives at the Heritage Alliance by Special Projects Coordinator Anne G’Fellers-Mason. Some of the people, like Adeline Deaderick and A.E. Jackson, left behind extensive diaries and records for Anne to pull from, while all that was left of others, such as young Maria Breazeale, was nothing more than

a name and a sweet epitaph on a marker. Anne didn’t let that stop her, though, and everyone’s story was crafted as a mixture of primary sources, inference, and imagination.

The 45 minute piece was also a mixture of choral pieces in which all characters interacted, and monologue, where each person got to share what brought them to Jonesborough, why they stayed, and why they’re buried in the Old Jonesborough Cemetery. Central themes focused on memory, sense of place and home, and the legacy each of us leaves behind when we pass on. “What will you tell visitors when you come to your place on the hill?”



*Paul Braxton as Alfred Ray, photo courtesy of Peter Montanti of Mountain Photographics, Inc.*

“A Spot on the Hill” was a fundraiser for the tombstone restoration fund, and over the course of its seven performances, the show raised over \$1,000 for the cause. This money will be spent on much needed repairs and is just another effort by the Heritage Alliance and the Town of Jonesborough to restore the cemetery to its former glory and incorporate it fully into the historic landscape of Jonesborough. The cemetery is very much part of the town’s story, and we hope that the play will encourage more people to visit and learn about the rich history and resources that Jonesborough has to offer.

If you weren’t able to make it out to any of the shows this fall, all is not lost. The Heritage Alliance hopes to put on the full stage production of the show within the next few years. The full length show will share even more stories and include live music. Of course, a show onstage is completely different from a show among the tombstones, and the Heritage Alliance plans to bring “A Spot On the Hill” back to the Old Jonesborough Cemetery with different stories.

**Guide:** Gordon Edwards

**Guy Sabin:** Don Burger

**Cadet W.H. Cox:** Kyle Mason

**Adeline Deaderick:** Jules Corriere & Anne G’Fellers-Mason

**A.E. Jackson:** Leon Overbay

**Sarah Ann Wells:** Amanda Brillhart

**Maria Breazeale:** Aisling Hagan

**Catherine Emmerson:** Deb Burger

**Alfred Ray:** Paul Braxton

**Jennie Ray:** Carla Forney & Donna Gillespie-Joyner



## George Dukes' Legacy Honored in New Exhibit in JWCHM

On September 28th, the statues that once adorned the outside of the Jonesborough Visitor's Center were rededicated in their new location. The statues had finally returned after a long absence. The same day, the Heritage Alliance premiered a new exhibit in the Jonesborough/Washington County History Museum honoring the hard work and legacy of George Dukes, the artist responsible for the statues and multiple other projects throughout town.

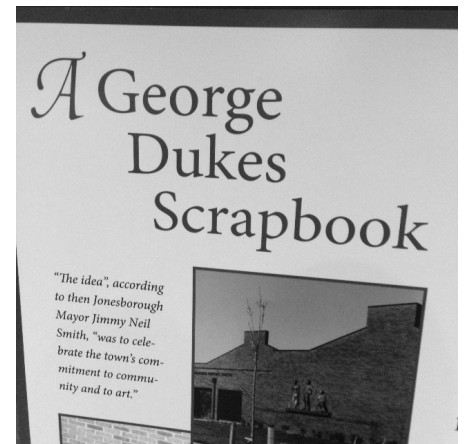
George Dukes was a master craftsman skilled in all sorts of mediums. The statues outside the Visitor's Center were meant to be one set in a series of three honoring the multicultural heritage of Jonesborough. Unfortunately, George passed away

before he was able to complete the other two sets.

George was also responsible for many of the wooden signs that used to cover the town, one of which can still be seen outside of Pardue Photographics. George knew clay and wood, and he also knew plaster, and he handcrafted the letters that still hang from the exhibits in the Jonesborough/Washington County History Museum. The Heritage Alliance is thrilled that the statues have been returned to the Visitor's Center, and that we were able to talk with the people who knew George best to create this very special exhibit in his honor.

"A George Dukes Scrapbook" includes memories from his friends

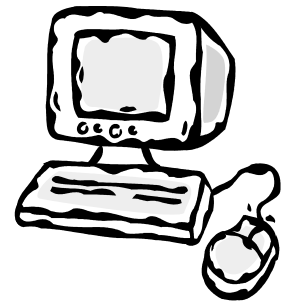
and his wife Elaine, and gives a glimpse behind the scenes into a master craftsman's workshop. We hope you will be able to view the exhibit in the museum and help us honor the legacy of a man who left his clay covered fingerprints all over the town he cared so much about.



*"A Spot On the Hill" Photo Courtesy of Peter Montanti of Mountain Photographics, Inc. Aisling Hagan as Maria Breazeale and Amanda Brillhart as Sarah Ann Wells listen as Fire Chief Guy Sabin, portrayed by Don Burger, shares what brought him to Jonesborough and why he's buried on Rocky Hill.*

*To see more photos from the show, please visit our Facebook page.*

### Help Us Save Paper!



Are you interested in receiving your copy of *The Link* through email?

If so, please email the Heritage Alliance at [info@heritageall.org](mailto:info@heritageall.org) and let us know where we can send your next edition.



## 37th Annual Progressive Dinner SOLD OUT!

The 37th Annual Progressive Dinner will be held on Saturday, December 6th, and this year's event is already sold out! This is the fastest the Progressive Dinner has sold out in a few years, and we hope you were able to get your tickets for one of Jonesborough's most festive traditions. If you weren't, there are still plenty of ways you can participate in the merriment. We're in need of volunteers to help with the event!

Every year, the Progressive Dinner welcomes 185 people to Jonesborough to share in our history, our homes, good food, and lots of holiday cheer. We need volunteers to help in each of the locations, but especially at the main course. If you

are interested in helping and sharing in the cheer, please contact the Heritage Alliance. The first seating leaves the Chester Inn at 3:00 and the last seating departs at 7:40. It's a long day, but a very rewarding day as people from all over the country share in the history, beauty, and fellowship of Jonesborough.

We couldn't possibly pull off such an endeavor without our volunteers, including Marcy Hawley whose work with the event has been invaluable. Marcy can be found on the bus most Decembers, ringing her bell, welcoming guests, and keeping the dinner on time. "I've been involved with the Progressive Dinner

since 1988. It's just wonderful, and I look forward to assisting with the event each year." Come and join us and Marcy and be a part of the holidays in Jonesborough.



## Historic Jonesborough Weekly Walking Tours A Big Hit

On September 15th, the Heritage Alliance, in partnership with Main Street Jonesborough, started regularly scheduled walking tours of Jonesborough's historic Main Street. The tours leave the International Storytelling Center every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday at 11:00 a.m. sharp and last about 45 minutes to an hour. The cost is \$5.00 per person. The tours have been very popular, and folks from all over the world have walked along to learn the history behind Tennessee's oldest town.

It's been a long standing dream of the Heritage Alliance to have regularly scheduled tours, and we're very thankful to Melinda Copp of Main Street Jonesborough for calling on us to help make the dream a reality.

The tours help expand the mission of the Alliance to "provide educational experiences related to history for a wide range of audiences." We've been doing tours for years for larger groups and school groups, but these weekly outings allow us to connect with visitors and families that come to Jonesborough for a myriad of reasons.

The tours have been so popular, extra times were added on Storytelling weekend, and the turnout was great, despite the rain and the chill. Extra tours will also be added to Saturday, November 29th to celebrate Small Business Saturday in downtown Jonesborough. Come and shop and take a break for some history and stories. Tours will leave at 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00 and 3:00

from the International Storytelling Center.

What can you expect on the town tour? You can expect to hear about the founding of Jonesborough and how it's managed to persevere over the years. You'll hear about specific buildings and who lived and worked there. You'll learn about the people who called Jonesborough their home, the people who built their lives here and sacrificed their fortunes, blood, and lives to keep the town standing. You're certain to hear more than one interesting tale. Tours will run through the end of this year and continue in the Spring of 2015. To make reservations for a larger group tour, please contact the Heritage Alliance directly at 423-753-9580.



## From the Archives: Cemetery Preservation, an Ongoing Struggle

A cornucopia of information, our archival newspapers are among our most interesting and entertaining collections. For the past several weeks, we have had the pleasure of Chad Bailey's company, as he works on an inventory of articles (by issue) in a collection of twentieth century *Herald and Tribunes*. This inventory will be most useful as we move towards a database that will allow us to search our newspaper collections by topic.

One characteristic of the *Herald and Tribune* that always yields interesting stories is their habit of running columns written by folks in various Washington County communities. These columns relate the goings on in the writer's community, offering us, the modern reader/researcher, the everyday events and individuals seldom referenced in the historic record. One such column was written for the Cherokee community by a gentleman under the nom de plume of "Old Noah" (Calvin Nelson Hoss). In the August 13, 1941 issue of the *Herald and Tribune*, Old Noah reprints a letter on the deplorable state of the cemetery at Cherokee Baptist Church. Because cemeteries are on our minds, and because this letter is such a clear indication of the on-going issues still faced by many cemeteries, (and because it is a great letter!), we offer it here:

### *An Open Letter to Old Noah*

*Dear Old Noah,*

*I was in the cemetery at the Cherokee Baptist Church last week and found it in a terrible condition. I had hoped that it would be cleaned off and look descent (sic) to strangers, at least, but it seems*

*there is no hope for any good result there.*

*To me a cemetery is one of the saddest places on earth even when it is kept in first class condition but when it is grown up in weeds, briars and sassafras bushes like the one at Cherokee Baptist church it is simply pitiful (sic). There is something wrong out there, I know not where.*

*It looks now as if prophecy is rapidly being fulfilled and the end \_\_\_\_\_ will soon come on earth. I think it would be a terrible thing on the great resurrection day that our loved ones in that cemetery would have to come out of a briar patch and get scratched all over and then have to climb a sassafras sapling before they could make the glorious ascension.*

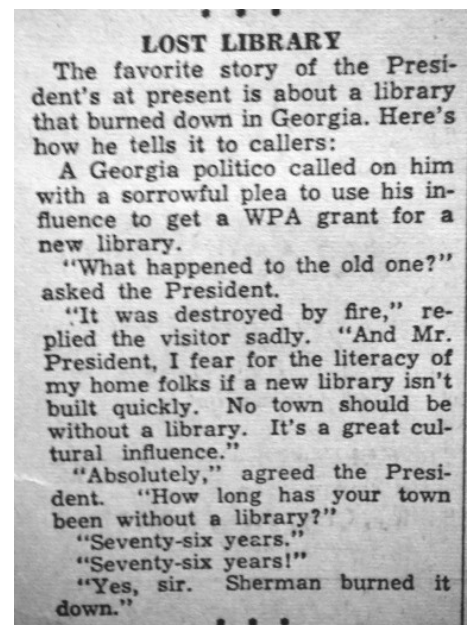
*Now "old Noah" I suggest that you call a day of "working" out there and take some mowing seythes (sic) with crooked handles and mow that filth down close to the ground, carry some axes along to cut down the saplings. Then rake all of this filth up and throw it over the fence. After that is done that cemetery can be mowed all over with a lawn-mower. This much can be done without a penny expense. Notify me of the "working" and I'll be there and help do the job.....*

The letter goes on to say the funds could be raised to help with maintenance and that it is the "Christian Duty" of every one who has a loved one buried there. It is signed R. M. Huffine, Bristol, Tenn. Old Noah follows up with a notice to Mr. Huffine in his August 25<sup>th</sup> 1943 column (2 years later) that work has commenced and that he and "Mrs. Roach of Jonesboro has a man to work a few days on the cemetery." The following year, Old Noah writes this:

*Lots of folks who have friends buried at Cherokee have been working on their graves. I do hope all the people will come and fill up the graves, as the graveyard looks much better, but more work should be done to the graves.* (H&T June 7, 1944).

Today, this is a lovely, well-maintained cemetery, no doubt thanks in part to the efforts initiated by RM Huffine, Old Noah and Mrs. Roach.

Clearly cemetery maintenance is not a modern issue, but rather an on-going struggle for most communities. There are over 450 cemeteries in Washington County alone and most of them need interested, knowledgeable folks to help preserve and care for them.



Funny little article from the *Herald & Tribune* on October 16, 1940.



## Welcome to our Archival Assistant, Chad Bailey!

The Heritage Alliance is thrilled to have Chad Bailey on board as our archival assistant. Everyone in Jonesborough knows Chad and all the hard work he puts in for the Jonesborough Genealogical Society. He's been especially instrumental in ensuring the success of the *Early Settlers of Washington County* book series, the first of which is due out later this year.

A 2014 graduate of East Tennessee State University with a double major in Accounting and History, Chad is currently enrolled in the Archival Studies program at ETSU on the Graduate level. He is working with the Heritage Alliance as a graduate assistant, and we could not be happier. Chad has already dedicated countless hours to area genealogy, and he helped map Maple Lawn Cemetery and upload hundreds of obits to the Washington County, Tennessee Obituary Project. He is also a 2014 inductee

into the Jonesborough Genealogical Society Hall of Fame.

His work at the Heritage Alliance includes preserving, cataloging, and archiving a collection of *Herald & Tribunes* from the 1940s. His information will be entered into a much larger database that will one day allow researchers to locate information in the papers based on date, topic, location, and much more. Please join us in welcoming Chad to the Duncan House. We're very fortunate to have him, and we can't wait to see what we're able to accomplish together.



*Chad Bailey in historical garb.*

## The Town of Jonesborough has a New Website!!!



[www.jonesboroughtn.org](http://www.jonesboroughtn.org)

Check it out for the latest town news. Stay up to date with special events, plays, concerts, and more with the in-depth calendar!

There's a special section for visitors and one for residents so that you can be sure you have all the info you need to visit or set up home in Tennessee's Oldest Town!

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

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Herald & Tribune  
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Jonesborough, TN  
423-753-3136  
[www.heraldandtribune.com](http://www.heraldandtribune.com)

The Law Offices of  
Mark D. Edmonds  
125 E Main St  
Jonesborough, TN  
423.753.8696



### November - December Calendar of Events

**November — December:** Historic Downtown Walking Tours, every Mon, Wed, Fri, & Sat, \$5.00 per person, tours leave from Storytelling Center at 11:00 a.m. Hear the stories behind Jonesborough's buildings and the people who made their lives here.

**November 1:** Chester Inn Museum on winter hours. Open Fri-Sat from 11:00-6:00 and on Sun from 1:00-5:00.

**November 14:** "Things Are Changing" at ETSU, 7:00 p.m. at Rogers-Stout Hall room 118. If you missed this Members-Only performance when it premiered last year, here's your chance to see it again for free. Join Julia Bullard Nelson as she defends her position as teacher/principal at the Warner Institute in Jonesborough.

**November 29:** Small Business Saturday, shop in Downtown Jonesborough and participate in a free Downtown Walking Tour. Tours leave the ISC @ 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00. Chester Inn will be open until 8:00 that evening.

**December 6:** 37th Annual Progressive Dinner. Event is SOLD OUT, but get in touch with us if you're interested in volunteering.

*Calendar events are subject to change, and new events may be added. Like us on Facebook and visit us at [www.hertiageall.org](http://www.hertiageall.org) to view our online calendar.*

Didn't make it by the Architectural Salvage Warehouse on any of its regularly scheduled Saturdays? No reason to panic! You can still make an appointment to visit the Warehouse by calling our office! The Warehouse will return to its Saturday hours the first weekend in April.



### What's On Display at the Chester Inn Museum?

Come by and learn about the musical history and legacy of Jonesborough. We have playbills from various clubs, including the Schubert Club and a very unique type of harmonica on display. Coming soon, our holiday exhibit will feature early 20th century letters to Santa, seasonal cards, and information on the Post Office in Jonesborough.

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

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117 West Main Street  
Jonesborough, TN  
423-753-2460

[www.mainstreetcatering.net](http://www.mainstreetcatering.net)

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



## From the Director's Desk



The success of "A Spot on the Hill" is particularly rewarding in light of the many hours of dedicated and often difficult volunteer labor, including a cast who withstood practically every type of precipitation Mother Nature could throw at them! We are both humbled and grateful to everyone who has worked so diligently to revitalize, restore and interpret the precious resources that are the historic Jonesborough cemeteries, locally known as Rocky Hill and College Hill.

At one time, not so long ago, these cemeteries were on the brink of oblivion. Decades of neglect, of being a non-priority, had allowed Mother Nature to reclaim the once park-like setting that characterizes these final resting places. But this is Jonesborough and this community does not allow its rich historic

resources to suffer demolition by neglect. Just when we needed him the most, a volunteer with a passion for old cemeteries appeared. He came to us with a desire to learn and a willingness to clear brush and trample through brambles. And he re-ignited a long smoldering fire to interpret the architecture within the cemetery gates and the stories found therein. But first we had to reclaim the grounds, discover the bits and pieces of broken, damaged and disintegrating markers, to continue the research and to learn all we could. This volunteer, together with the resources of the Town, has spent the past three years putting the old Jonesborough cemeteries back together again.

Our cemetery volunteer does not like public recognition. He does what he does out of love and respect and he is always quick to acknowledge that he is simply carrying on the work of many who have gone before. He is also quick to credit the Town, and

especially Bobby Oliver and his crew, who have moved this project forward much faster than we could have hoped. And like him, we would also like to recognize and to thank the Town for this vital work. We hope, as Heritage Alliance members, you will take the opportunity to do the same. And though I honor his wishes by not naming him in *The Link*, we all know who this cemetery volunteer extraordinaire is.....please thank him as well.

The Old Jonesborough Cemeteries are once again beautiful spaces of quiet repose. They help us tell our stories. They inspire us with their beauty and their perseverance and they deserve all of the time and attention we can give. "A Spot on the Hill" is still a work in progress. As long as there are stories to tell, we will continue this program.

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## Boone Street Market: Adaptive Reuse Continues in Jonesborough

On October 29th, the new Boone Street Market, the year round home of the Jonesborough Farmer's Market opened for business! The store offers fresh produce, eggs, cheeses, sauces, and much more, all grown, harvested, and concocted by local farmers.

The Boone Street Market welcomes people to town as the entranceway to the Jonesborough Historic District. The store is surrounded by a charming courtyard perfect for outside dining and gathering, and the walkway

leading to downtown now displays beautiful murals that depict seasonal events in town.

The Market is located in the old Exxon Station, and for many years residents and visitors wondered what would become of the abandoned building. Students participating in Governor's School for the Scientific Exploration of Tennessee Heritage picked the structure more than once as their final project. Some of them even suggested it be a year round home to the Farmer's Market.

In this case, dreams became reality, and the Heritage Alliance could not be prouder of the Town of Jonesborough, Jonesborough Locally Grown, and this outstanding example of adaptive reuse. To stay up-to-date on the Market and what's in stock, visit [www.jfmstore.blogspot.com](http://www.jfmstore.blogspot.com) and like them on Facebook!







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Jonesborough, TN 37659

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

Giving Opportunities: THANK YOU for your commitment to preserving our heritage and building a future together!

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