



The Link



preserving our heritage and building a future together

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Winter 2015

Washington County Veterans Exhibit Continues at JWCHM

The rich volunteer spirit of the area is captured in the exhibit "A Military Life," which continues at the Jonesborough/Washington County History Museum through July. A wide variety of items have been displayed from Washington County veterans and their families, spanning World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf Wars. Current display items include a diverse variety of military radios and other technology-based equipment, along with photos, flags, articles of clothing, newspaper clippings, and military accessories.

This is a revolving exhibit that changes content twice a year. Currently the majority of items have been provided by Doug Bonnot, a 22-year veteran of the U.S. Army Security Agency and Operations Company, serving in Vietnam from 1970-71. Mr. Bonnet, author of *The Sentinel and the Shooter*, also gave a presentation detailing his perspective on the Vietnam War and U.S. intelligence-related equipment on March 1st at the Jonesborough Visitor's Center.

Adjacent to this display is a rare World War I trench mortar (see detailed story Page 3).

Local veterans that have war related artifacts they would like to loan for display are invited to contact the Heritage Alliance.



New 2015 Hours and Topics for the Chester Inn and Town Tours

A new schedule has been announced for the Heritage Alliance's downtown Jonesborough tours. By starting later in the day, tour times will better reflect town visitation patterns. Tours are sponsored by the Heritage Alliance and Main Street Jonesborough.

For 2015, town tours will be offered on Mondays and Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. for the months of March and April, and on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from May through December.

No reservations are required for the tours — tickets can be purchased for \$5 at the International Storytelling Center, where the tours begin.

A regularly scheduled Cemetery Tour is also planned for summer of 2015. It will highlight Jonesborough's historical burial plots, Victorian cemetery customs, along with monument architecture and symbolism.

In order to make these tours successful, more volunteer guides are needed. Don't be afraid to try

it! One-on-one training is provided, along with photos and documents that can be used to help you tell the colorful story of Jonesborough.

New this year, the Chester Inn will now be open on Mondays. Opening day was Friday, February 27th. The Museum hours for 2015:

March - April:

Mon., Fri., Sat. 11-6; Sun. 1-5.

May-October:

Mon., Wed. - Sat. 11-6; Sun. 1-5.

November-December:

Mon., Fri., Sat. 11-6; Sun. 1-5.



'Day of Service' Volunteers Uncover Lost Jonesborough History

A piece of Jonesborough history is being reclaimed by hard-working volunteers, as well as City of Jonesborough personnel. Jonesborough's African-American cemetery, known locally as the College Hill Cemetery, is located just off East Main Street. About 150 tombstones are visible in the cemetery, but since many graves are unmarked, the actual number of individuals buried here is not known.

A big step in reclaiming this site took place as a part of the annual National 'Day of Service' to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The Heritage Alliance joined with the McKinney Center and Booker T. Washington School alumni to accomplish the work - the project marked a coming together of several diverse groups from the area. A total of 47 volunteers took part. Four previously undocumented tombstones were uncovered the day of this project.

Volunteers pulled weeds and removed debris to help clean and



Volunteers clearing brush from the cemetery (photo courtesy McKinney Center)

preserve the site. Also helping were neighbors Don and Deborah Burger, who have cleared debris from the half of the access alley located on their property.

Heritage Alliance Cemetery coordinator Gordon Edwards remarked "It's amazing the difference in this place now compared to how it looked three or four

years ago - so much as been done to clean up and restore this burial ground."

The cemetery dates from 1890, and was the burial ground for the African-American citizens of Jonesborough during a time of segregation - in death as well as life.

An eleven-foot wide access alley served as the traditional entrance to the cemetery. This right-of-way was donated by the two adjacent lot-owners to allow burial processions to access the cemetery.

Although near capacity, College Hill Cemetery and the more recent addition at the top of the hill near Lawling Avenue, known as Evergreen, are still in use.

Work will be ongoing to restore and maintain this valuable piece of Jonesborough's past.



The Mystery of Washington County's Newton 6-inch Trench Mortar

The Newton 6-inch Mortar is a rare survivor of World War I. Only a few of these guns are known to survive, and others are located in New Zealand, England, and Australia. This particular mortar stood in front of the Washington County Courthouse for years, but how it arrived in Jonesborough remains a mystery. In 2013, the Town of Jonesborough donated the Mortar to the Heritage Alliance for use in the museum.

This model was introduced in February, 1917 and was used by British and American troops in France. It was manufac-

tured by Hadfield's of Sheffield, England.

It is a simple, smooth bore mortar consisting of a 57-inch long one-piece steel tube barrel sitting on a wooden platform. The mortar could fire six 52-pound exploding cast iron projectiles per minute, and had an effective range of 100 to 1,420 yards.

The mortar operated from concealed pits close to the front lines during trench warfare, and could be disassembled and transported by horse-drawn carts.



Another World War I Mystery...

Before the advent of cell phones and the electronic connectedness provided by modern technology, it was much easier for one to just "disappear." Be it by personal choice or as a victim of foul play, sometimes a person just vanished, leaving friends and loved ones to forever wonder their fate.

An example can be found in this correspondence from near the close of World War I, from a young, southern lady (we'll call her "Cute," as that is the name given her by her soldier pen pals), who exchanged letters with soldiers on the WWI battlefields of Europe.

This note is from a mother in Chicago writing to "Cute," attempting to locate her miss-

ing son Edward, an Army Lieutenant, who had just completed his tour of duty overseas. He had arrived in New York in June of 1919 and expected to be in Chicago within the week.

His mother became very concerned, and when Cute's letter to the young lieutenant arrived in Chicago, the mother wrote that she was... "hoping to hear he had gone South. I had received a telegram June 18th saying he had arrived in New York safely and would be home within a week but have had no other word from him, ...we have telegraphed and made every inquiry, but it's like working in the dark as we can not trace him after June 20th.... Edward was always so

thoughtful about my worrying that he never planned a trip, no matter how insignificant, without telling me where I could reach him and through this entire war – he never missed writing from one to 3 times a week, he was so anxious to reach home I can't account for this silence unless the strain has been too much the past year or foul play as I am sure he had quite a large sum of money with him..."

Additional letters tell us that Edward was never found, though the Secret Service, Army Intelligence, and police in both Chicago and New York were called in. In her last letter to Cute, the young man's mother included newspaper clippings from the *Chicago Herald Examiner* stating: "The Pinkerton operatives believe he was the victim of an organization of crooks who prey on discharged soldiers."



2014 Progressive Dinner a Tasty Success!

The 37th Annual Heritage Alliance Progressive Dinner held this past December 6th, continued to build upon the success of previous years. Reservations sold out quickly, and the dinner was completely booked by the first of October.

The Alliance wishes to thank the evening's sponsors, Ferguson Bath and Kitchen Gallery, First Tennessee Bank of Jonesborough, Celebrate!, Food City of Jonesborough, and Lowe's of

Jonesborough. Thank you to Main Street Café & Catering for the delicious main course. Thank you, too, to the Town of Jonesborough for their constant support.

Our thanks also go out to the homeowners and businesses who graciously hosted this year - Mr. Jimmy Rhein, Mr. & Mrs. Bob and Nansee Williams, the McKinney Center at Booker T. Washington School, and Dr. Joe and Rev. Kaye Florence.

Music was provided by Don & Deb Burger, Galina Timofeev and her students, the Westwind Trio, Lisa Harrington and her students, and the Jonesborough Novelty Band.

Special thanks to you, our volunteers, who made the evening possible.

Stay tuned as we plan for the 38th Annual Progressive Dinner on Saturday, December 5th.



Photos by Charlie Mauk of the Herald & Tribune



New Heritage Alliance Volunteers Onboard

A simple online click can lead one to unexpected places — so happened to Bob and Mary Noel as they found a neglected but wonderful old farmhouse for sale near Limestone in western Washington County, TN. Living in Asheville for two decades, they hadn't planned to move for several years, but the house and setting (on the banks of the Nolichucky adjacent to a historic truss bridge) was a unique find, and they jumped in, moving here a few months ago.

Bob and Mary are both archaeologists by training, working for

the U.S. Forest Service. Mary retired a few years ago and has started a second career as a graphic artist, while Bob continues working for the government.

Mary has a MA from the University of Idaho where she documented log structures in the Rocky Mountain region. Bob holds a BA from Western Carolina University, with an expertise in Southern Prehistoric cultures.

When not attending to old house fixing, Mary will be assisting the Heritage Alliance with writing, graphics, and tours. Bob will be

on hand for tours and other special projects.



Mary and Bob Noel

Bob Dunn Leads Town Tours



One of the Heritage Alliance's hardest working volunteers is Bob Dunn, who started giving town tours this past November. He was especially helpful on Small Business Saturday, when he led a tour with 22 people!

Bob explains... "I wanted to become a tour guide because I was very interested in the history of

Jonesborough and TN... Being a native from Virginia, I didn't know much about TN and the history of the town that is now our home... Also I wanted to give back to the town something for the great welcome we received upon moving here... Working for the Heritage Alliance has been wonderful and I've been able to meet so many people from all over the world and share my love of this awesome place!"

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DID YOU KNOW . . . The Yarn Exchange

Don't miss the chance to share an evening going on the air with the Jonesborough Yarn Exchange! This program is now in it's fourth year, and interest keeps growing.

The cast of thirty-plus comes from a variety of community groups. Participants include kids, teenagers, and adults. Source material comes from historical documents as well as remembrances & stories provided by local residents.

The Heritage Alliance has our own, monthly segment known as "Ask the Historian." Past topics have included Jonesborough's myths, rural education, and African-American history. What will we talk about next?

Come and join the Yarn Exchange live every fourth Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. to find out. Tickets are \$5 and \$1 for kids 12 & under (group rates available). Tickets can be reserved by calling 423-753-1010.



JONESBOROUGH YARN EXCHANGE
Jonesborough's Original Storytelling Radio Hour

The Yarn Exchange program is broadcast the following (every fourth) Wednesday on the local NPR affiliate, WETS FM 89.5, and on WETS-HD 1. You can also listen on the Internet at www.wets.org/streaming.

Calendar of Events ***March — April 2015***

Historic Town Tours: Every Monday & Saturday at 1:00 pm. Tickets are \$5.00. Tours depart from International Storytelling Center.

Chester Inn Museum: Open 11-6 on Fri, Sat, Mon and 1-5 on Sun.

March 23: Jonesborough Yarn Exchange at 7:00 p.m. at the International Storytelling Center, contact 423-753-1010 for tickets.

April 4: Architectural Salvage Warehouse opens for the season. The Warehouse will be open every first and third Saturday of the month from 8:00-11:00.

April 18: Architectural Salvage Warehouse open from 8:00-11:00.

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

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116 Franklin Avenue
Jonesborough, TN 37659

423-753-3819

www.franklinhousebb.com

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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/>



Wanted: Historical Photos of the Jackson Theatre

The Jackson Theatre building has occupied downtown Jonesborough for almost a century. The building opened about 1921 and the first movie theatre, a silent one, opened in 1922. The Jackson Theatre, the third theatre at this site, opened in the late 1940s or early 1950s. The theater closed its

doors ten years later in 1960, and since that time the building has been retail space. The town of Jonesborough acquired the building in 2014, and has plans to return it to its original use as a theatre and performing arts venue, and also to restore the building's façade to that of its cinema days.

Despite this long period of providing entertainment to the town, only one historical photo is known to exist of the Jackson Theatre (below). We are seeking copies of any 20th century photos of the Jackson Theatre — these will help to recapture its original appearance.



Coming This Year to the Chester Inn Museum . . .

Last year, the Heritage Alliance was honored to receive two donations of furniture for a lodging room in the Chester Inn Museum. The furniture is safely stored on the third floor of the Inn, where the lodging rooms traditionally were. Soon, work will commence on setting up the space and interpreting it so that visitors can get an extended glimpse into what inn life was like in the late 1800s.

We'll keep you posted on the new room's progress. Look for more information in later editions of *The Link*, on our website, and our Facebook page.





212 East Sabin Dr.
Jonesborough, TN 37659

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HA Office Phone: 423-753-9580
Chester Inn Museum: 423-753-4580
www.heritageall.org
info@heritageall.org



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Executive Director: Deborah Montanti
dmontanti@heritageall.org
Special Projects Coordinator: Anne
G'Fellers-Mason
amason@heritageall.org
Chester Inn Museum: Skye McFarland
chesterinn@heritageall.org
Oak Hill School: Marjorie Shaefer and
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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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