



The Link



preserving our heritage and building a future together

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Winter 2018

Christopher Taylor House Restoration Begins



The Christopher Taylor House, built in 1777, is one of the oldest structures in Washington County. It sits on Main St. in Jonesborough.

Long-awaited repairs to the Christopher Taylor House began on February 18. The first project was to strip off the old, leaking roof and replace it with a heavy plastomer base layer to stop rain from entering the structure. Future needs will be to complete the roof by putting on authentic wood shakes, and to repair wood rot visible in the ends of some wall logs. The recently completed project will allow the structure to dry out and protect it going forward.

Financial assistance will be needed to complete this future work, and donations made toward saving the Christopher Taylor House are welcomed.

Revised Town Tour Schedule for 2018

New tour options are being added for 2018 and some existing tours have had their times adjusted based on a review of last year's visitation. Added once a month, is the Railroad Tour which will include a visit to the Chuckey Depot Railroad Museum. The popular Mythbusting Tour has also received regular monthly spots. The traditional Town Tour and Old Jonesborough Cemetery Tour will continue on a slightly revised schedule. A combination ticket will again be offered for those wishing to attend multiple tours.

Town Tour: Saturdays at 1:00 (starting in March); also Fridays at 1:00 and Thursday nights at 7:00 (beginning in May).

Mythbusters Tour: 2nd Saturday each month at 2:30 (beginning March); also 1st Saturday at 1:00 (beginning April).

Railroad Tour: 4th Saturday each month at 2:30 (starting in March).

Cemetery Tour: 1st & 3rd Saturday each month at 2:30 (beginning May 19).



Dana Kehs shares her stories of Jonesborough with guests



Nominations Sought for the Samuel Cole Williams Award

Nominations for the Samuel Cole Williams Award will be due in August. The award recognizes a person, organization or group whose body of work has made an outstanding contribution to local history.

Samuel Cole Williams (1864-1948) was an attorney, businessman, historian and a judge on the Tennessee Supreme Court, who practiced law in both Jonesborough and

Johnson City. He was chair of the Tennessee Historical Commission from 1941 to 1946, and authored numerous works on Tennessee history. The public Library in Johnson City bears his name.

This prize was first presented in 2000, and until 2016, it was presented by the Washington County Historical Association at their annual banquet each November. "This award is a significant recognition of

'citizen historians' throughout the region," says HA Director Deborah Montanti "and, as such, needs to be continued. Therefore, it is our pleasure to announce the Heritage Alliance will take up the mantle of presenting the Samuel Cole Williams Award."

Information and criteria for nominations can be found on the Heritage Alliance website. The award winner(s) will be announced at the Heritage Alliance Annual Meeting next February.

History Happy Hour Returns for 2018

History Happy Hour begins in March with another season of interesting programs. Here's what's on tap for 2018:

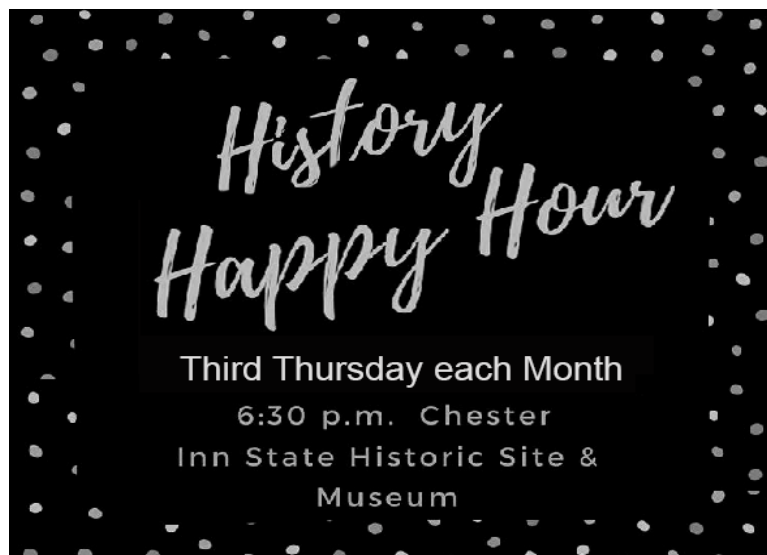
March 15: Dollie Boyd, Tusculum College, "19th Century Optical Illusions"

April 19: Lynn Richardson, "Freda Wilhoit's Life During WWII"

May 17: Susanna Webb, Walters State Community College, "J. G. Ramsay and the Annals of Tennessee History"

June 21: Andrew Johnson National Historic Site, "Impeachment"

July 19: Curtis Buchanan, "Windsor Chair Making"



August 16: Jennifer Bauer, Sycamore Shoals State Hist Site, "Sabine Hill Restoration"

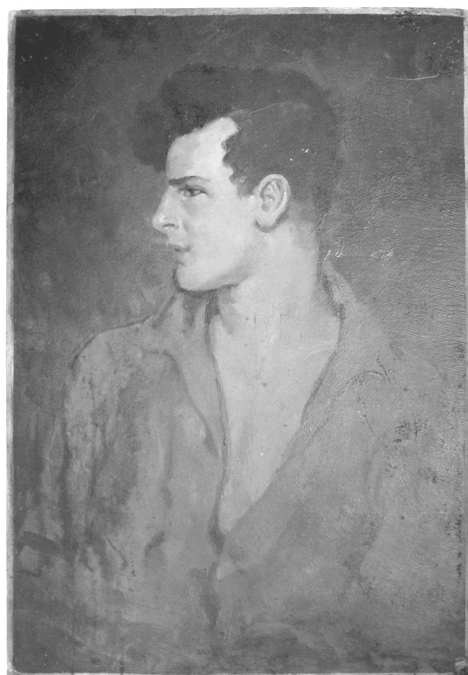
September 20: Donna Briggs, "From the Washington Co. Archives"

October 18: Rene Rodgers, Birthplace of Country Music Museum. "The 1927 Bristol Recording Sessions"

November 15: Dr. Brenda G'Fellers & Kristin Pearson "Searching for Rhea Wells"



Rhea Wells Exhibit A Success



Self-portrait of Rhea Wells as a young man

“Far Away and Close to Home,” an exhibit of art created by local author and illustrator Rhea Wells has completed a successful run at the McKinney Center. A series of programs about his life and art were also held there in January and February. The exhibit included art from his children's books, most of which were published in the 1920's and 1930's, as well as paintings from his art school portfolio.

Wells (1891-1962) was born in Jonesborough but traveled extensively during his life and his works were influenced by travels to Europe and Asia. He is considered a pioneer in the publication of books written for children.

A companion exhibit of Well's works continues to be available for viewing at the Jonesborough & Washington County History Museum.

The exhibit was sponsored by the Heritage Alliance and funded in part by a grant from Humanities Tennessee.

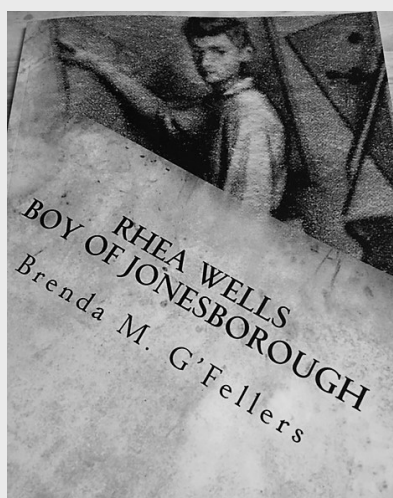


Exhibit Visitors

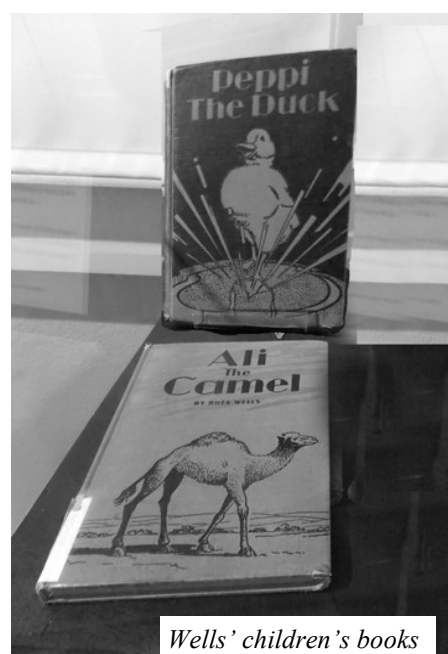
New Book on Rhea Wells Now Available

A new book has been published titled *Rhea Wells Boy of Jonesborough*. It examines the life of Jonesborough native, Rhea Wells. The book's author is Dr. Brenda G'Fellers, a former professor at Bluefield College and Virginia Intermont College. She is currently the Assistant Director for Technical Services & Statistics at the Bristol Public Library.

The publication is now on sale at the Jonesborough Visitor's Center.



Book Cover, published by Mountain Gap Books



Wells' children's books



New Format for Progressive Dinner: “Colors of Christmas”

To commemorate 40 years of the Progressive Dinner, the HA partnered with the Town of Jonesborough to debut the Colors of Christmas this past December to sell-out crowds. This year included visits to historic

sites in town (for music and stories) with a deluxe dinner at the McKinney Center.

Thanks this year go to those who hosted the tour-goers, the Adams-Lyons Home, the Eureka Inn, the Blair-Moore House, Eggplant Cottage and the Floyd Home.

Also many thanks to our sponsors, Celebrate! First Tennessee Bank of Jonesborough, Food City of Jonesborough, Lowes of Jonesborough, the Posy Shop, Broyles Florist, Inc., Noelle's, Boone Street Market, Main St Café & Catering, Embree House Wedding Cakes, the Town of Jonesborough, & the McKinney Center.



Beautiful table settings and décor awaited guests



The Jonesborough Novelty Band and Mayor Kelly Wolfe were among the musicians providing entertainment

Chester Inn Window Replacement

Visitors to the Chester Inn during the next few months may notice construction under way.

The State of Tennessee has funded a project to replace most of the windows in the historic inn. The windows on the front of the museum with the photographs of early Jonesborough will not be effected by this project.

The existing windows

were installed during the 1970s and are beginning to show their age. The new windows are period specific and will enhance the look of the inn as well as providing increased structural protection.



Program on World War I to be Held at History Museum

A woman searching for her missing son who returned from war but never came home. A man who was reported to the authorities by his neighbors because he refused to purchase war bonds. A soldier who was sick and tired of being stuck in the mud, and another who wouldn't change places with the president of the hometown bank. A community hard hit by the deadly Spanish influenza pandemic.

Come hear these and other stories at a program by the Heritage Alliance, on April 8 at



3:00 p.m. in the Jonesborough/Washington County History Museum. This Reader's Theatre piece shares firsthand accounts of the lives of Washington County

citizens during World War I. Hear the struggles from overseas and on the home front as century old newspaper headlines come to life.

Home School Day Coming May 18



Students try their hand at "old school" learning

The Heritage Alliance is excited to announce that its first ever Home School Day will take place on Friday, May 18. History and heritage based activities are planned from 9:00am – 4:30pm. There will be a variety of

experiences for students from first grade through high school. Students are encouraged to come and experience history with their families in Tennessee's oldest town. Registration is open now at heritageall.org.

Activities that day will include:

- Lessons at Oak Hill School, a one room schoolhouse restored to the year 1892.
- Tours of downtown Jonesborough and the Old Jonesborough Cemetery.
- Hands-on activities with artifacts at the Jonesborough/Washington County History Museum.
- History hunts at the Chester Inn State Historic Site and Museum.
- Listening to a Storyteller.
- Train based activities in Jonesborough's Chuckey Depot Railroad Museum.
- Help discover artifacts at an Archeological site.
- Older students can help solve mysteries surrounding the Cholera Epidemic of 1873.



Heritage Alliance Annual Meeting Held

The Heritage Alliance held its annual meeting on February 1st. In spite of snowy weather, more than 70 members and supporters attended the event.

Updates were provided on town tours, Chester Inn programs, special events and upcoming projects, such as the restoration of the Christopher Taylor House. Thank you everyone for your continued enthusiasm and support for historic preservation in our area.



Quiz winners try out their fancy new-old-stock collars from Hoss and McCall Department Store

Calendar of Events

- **Chester Inn Museum** open Mon, Fri-Sat from 11-6 and Sun from 1-5, Wed & Thurs added on May 2
- **Architectural Salvage Warehouse** open from 8:00-12:00 on April 7 & 21, May 5 & 19, June 2 & 16
- **History Happy Hour** at 6:30 on March 15, April 19, & May 17
- **Heritage Alliance at Senior Center** new time at 10:00 a.m. on March 19, April 16, & May 21
- **April 8:** "I Have Been in the Front Line Trenches and in No Man's Land. . . " Readers' Theatre performance at the Jonesborough & Washington County History Museum at 3:00
- **May 18:** Home School Day in Jonesborough, registration now open.

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

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116 Franklin Avenue
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www.franklinhousebb.com

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Jonesborough, TN 37659

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www.gracemeadowsfarmtn.com/

SonGear: A Christian
Lifestyle Company
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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 Graveyard

For this issue, Gordon Edwards is providing an update on his recent activities.

Burial grounds never stop telling stories. During a recent cleanup at Rocky Hill, pieces of the deteriorating stump in the Thomas Emmerson plot were being removed. This stump has been permitted to deteriorate slowly and has served as a teaching point about vegetation management within burial grounds.

Within the base of the stump, a jagged piece of marble marker was found. The growth of the tree most likely overtook the marker many decades ago. After performing a fit check, it was determined that the piece found did match the marker of Catherine Jacobs Emmerson which has been resting nearby.

The tree growth most certainly did cause her marker to break and fall. Those two pieces subsequently found their way to a spot within the fence, and laid resting on the ground. Because of elapsed time, present company did not know precisely where Catherine's marker should be placed. Finding the planted base will now permit the rest

of her marker to be placed at the now known head of her grave.

Burial ground preservation is a journey, not a specific closed end operation. One never knows when something new will be found to shed more light. I will be talking more about this during my tours this summer – come by and say hello.

Emmerson plot as it looked in 2012 prior to cleaning (stump is in upper right of photo).



As stump is removed, tombstone base is now visible (in box) at base of the decayed stump.

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

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Telford, TN
423.913.3812
www.embreefarm.com

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Oak Hill School: Marjorie Shaefer & Deanna
Carey



*Preserving the architectural, historical, and cultural
resources of our region and providing heritage
educational 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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