



# The Link



*preserving our heritage and building a future together*

Volume 19, Number 2

Summer 2020

## Preserving the Johnson City Postal Savings Bank and Post Office

Since the fall of last year, the Heritage Alliance has collaborated with local government officials, state agencies, community groups, and neighborhood organizations in order to help preserve the historic Johnson City Postal Savings Bank and Post Office (located on Ashe Street). Currently, the Heritage Alliance is working to submit an application to the Tennessee Historical Commission in the hopes that the building may join the National Register of Historic Places.

Recently, the Heritage Alliance was able to organize funding in order to complete a feasibility

study of the building in the hopes it will contribute to the building's preservation and eventual reuse. The Heritage Alliance has been working on this project because of the building's exceptional history and architecture.

Throughout its history, the building has been referred to as the "Ashe Street Courthouse," referencing its former use as the county courthouse. The Ashe Street building was purchased by the government of Washington County and converted into a courthouse and county building; it served this purpose from 1940 until a new courthouse was built in 1985.

But what about before then? From its opening in January 1911 to 1937, the Ashe Street building actually functioned as a U. S. Postal Savings Bank and Post Office, the first in Tennessee. This post office, which was also the first Federal Building in Johnson City, was designed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of the Supervising Architect, James Knox Taylor. Construction was completed December 10, 1910 and the site opened for business on January 3, 1911.

Promoted by President Howard Taft, the Postal Savings System attempted to leverage the public's familiarity with and faith in local post offices in order to improve the nation's financial situation by bringing money "out of hiding... that would not otherwise find its way into circulation." Children over the age of ten years old, as well as married women, were also allowed to make deposits. Furthermore, the site offered free mail delivery, job postings, and money orders for local citizens.

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## Online & Virtual Programming Update

Here are some of the highlights of our previous and upcoming online programming:

- **Virtual Field Trip Day:** In May we put together a virtual field trip for students who missed field trips this spring and for any one else that wanted to attend. It featured visits to familiar sites, behind the scenes footage, tours, and much more. We used a mix of recorded video & livestream across our social media pages throughout the day. The whole package is still available on our website under Education and via a playlist on the Chester Inn Museum's YouTube channel.
- **Chester Inn Museum YouTube channel videos:** In addition to posting stand alone videos and artifact features, we have launched successful series

on our YouTube Channel including "Victorian Social Distancing," "Homecooked History," and "Amateur History Theater." These videos provide historical content in quirky ways, showcasing our organization's commitment to history while highlighting our staff's unique identity.

- **History Happy Hour:** While our first two programs of the season were cancelled, we successfully transitioned our popular series to an online format this summer. As the series continues this year with scheduled in-person presentations, we will continue to offer a virtual livestream on our Facebook page.
- **Taste of Tennessee:** A new virtual fundraiser planned for

August 22nd! Read more about the program on pg. 3!

- **Virtual Exhibits:** The Chester Inn Museum's current exhibit, *Fifty Years of Preservation in Jonesborough*, is also an online exhibit. The next exhibit for the museum, *Influenza Pandemic, September 1918-April 1919*, is an online-only exhibit and will debut in July. It features local press coverage of the 1918 flu outbreak, the impact in Washington County, death records from the fall of 1918, and more. You can also view a digital version of *Stories & Stitches: A Historical Quilt Exhibit* on our website.

Keep an eye out on our social media and YouTube channels for updates and more digital content as the year progresses!



### Chuckey Depot Museum Update

The current exhibit *My Ties to the Railroad: Stories & Artifacts from the Line* is on display through the end of 2020. The exhibit features train items from all over the country. Each item means something special to the people who lent them. Included in the exhibit is a train sign from the Tennessee Homecoming in 1986 loaned by Watauga Valley President Mike Tilley.

The Chuckey Depot Museum is currently open from 1:00 to 4:00 PM on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Hours subject to change.



## Taste of Tennessee on August 22nd

The “Taste of Tennessee” is a new virtual program that promises to bring people together to explore and celebrate Appalachian foodways. This day-long digital festival, presented in video installments via Facebook, Zoom, and other platforms is full of education and entertainment, and also serves as a fundraiser for The Heritage Alliance.

Featuring historic recipes, techniques, and ingredients, as well as modern spins on

Appalachian classics, “Taste of Tennessee” allows the public to come together around a virtual “table.”

The event is scheduled for Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, with presentations and activities tentatively planned for 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Confirmed presenters include Nathan Brand from Timber!, Shelley Crowe from Boone St. Market, and many more! Details will be announced via social media.

The Heritage Alliance is actively collecting recipes for our community-curated cookbook. The cookbook will be released later this year. Do you have a favorite recipe that you would like to contribute? Please contact Programming Coordinator Megan Cullen Tewel at [mtewell@heritageall.org](mailto:mtewell@heritageall.org) in order to share. And don't miss this exciting opportunity to learn more about our local food heritage--bring your appetite for Appalachia!

### History Happy Hour Summer and Fall 2020 Schedule *In Person and Streaming Online* *Location of program in parentheses*

8/20 Birthplace of Country Music (at ISC)  
Guitar Styles Used at the 1927 Bristol Sessions

9/17 Gary Purchase-David Crockett B.P. (at ISC)  
Appalachian Guerilla Warfare

10/15 Kelsey Solomon- Walters State (at ISC)  
Mildred Haun, Appalachian Writer

11/19 Langston Centre Alumni (at ISC)  
Stories from Langston

\*Speakers and Topics subject to change  
\*All programs are **Thursdays at 6:30 PM**  
and **free** to the public.  
\*ISC: International Storytelling Center

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

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702 West Jackson Blvd  
Jonesborough, TN  
423-753-3136  
[www.heraldandtribune.com](http://www.heraldandtribune.com)

The Law Offices of Edmonds  
& Edmonds  
105 E Main St  
Jonesborough, TN  
423.753.8696



## Volunteer Spotlight: Jan Turner

The summer volunteer spotlight is on Jan Turner. Jan began volunteering with the Heritage Alliance around the end of April 2019 by assisting with the relocation of the loom from the Jonesborough & Washington County History Museum to its new home in the Christopher Taylor House. Jan helped to disassemble, transport, and reassemble the loom. She also helped get the loom in working order.

Some of that work included restoring the wood that had dried, placing extra padding in the truck for transport, and adding shimming when reassembled since the floor in the Taylor House was not level. The loom is a counterbalance loom so it requires trial and error and

constant retightening, and stability is key.

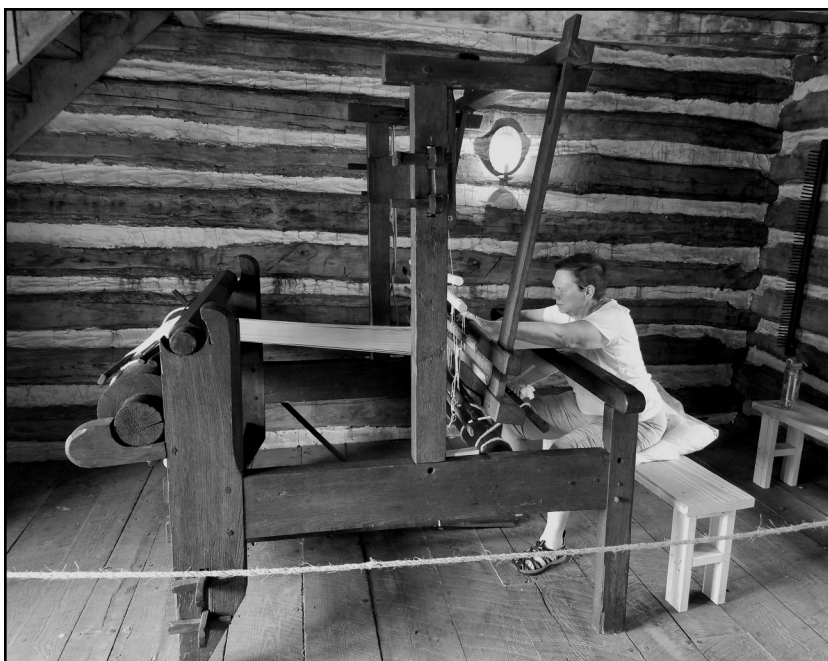
Jan's interest in historic site volunteering began with researching family antiques. She started sharing her family's history with their children and classrooms, and from there she began working with historic sites and re-enactors. She has worked with Rocky Mount, Sycamore Shoals, and has also worked a spinning wheel during the historic drama *Liberty!*

Jan hopes to help visitors to the Taylor House understand what life was like for the Taylor family versus what life is like today. For example, the Taylor House "was really a place to sleep and eat, without a lot of socializing." She also said that children tend to ask

questions about the bedrooms while adults focus on questions about the building itself.

You can usually find Jan weaving on the loom. "In general, I like what I create. I enjoy making towels or table runners, working with lace or using two types of thread for coverlets. On the CTH loom I just enjoy the privilege of working on something that old. Weaving was men's work, and women usually learned from their husbands and fathers." Jan learned a lot about weaving from the traveling weaver at Rocky Mount and her own 18th & 19th century pattern books.

You can purchase pieces she's woven at the Taylor House at the Jonesborough Visitor's Center!



*Jan on the loom in 2019.*

### KEEP UP WITH US!

If you enjoy our content, be sure to like and follow these accounts to stay current with our programs, schedules, and amazing online content!

Instagram and Facebook:  
@Heritage Alliance

Facebook and YouTube:  
@Chester Inn



## Covid19 Update

### Chester Inn:

- The Chester Inn museum opened back up to the public on June 1st with limited hours. The museum is open on Friday, Saturday, and Monday from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and on Sunday from 1:00 to 5:00 PM through August. We will reevaluate and update the schedule as necessary.
- The museum's current exhibit is extended through August and can be accessed virtually on the Heritage Alliance's website. The next exhibit will also be online and available starting in July.
- Town Tours are on Saturdays at 1:00 PM Cemetery Tours are on the first and third Saturdays each month at 2:30 PM. Town Tour tickets are \$5, Cemetery tickets are \$3, and combo tickets are \$7.

- Tours are limited to 10 people at a time, but you can reserve your tickets in advance.
- The museum is limited to 25 guests at a time.
- Upstairs tours are limited to 6 guests at a time.
- Due to the Washington County mandate, masks are currently required. Even without the mandate, they are highly recommended.

### Duncan House:

- Due to the Washington County mandate, masks are currently required. Even without the mandate, they are highly recommended.



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Eventually the needs of a growing city and county became constrained by the building's smaller scale and historic design, despite several additions. The building served a few other purposes, notably the location of the county's 9-1-1 emergency services, before being vacated in 2017.

Throughout its many years of public service, the Ashe Street building (now referred to as the Johnson City Postal Savings Bank and Post Office) has given much to the citizens of Washington County. Our hope is that the historic preservation of this building will allow local residents to continue benefiting from this historic and architectural treasure for years to come.

## Stories and Stitches: A Historical Quilt Exhibit

The Heritage Alliance and the McKinney Center have partnered on an exciting new exhibit, *Stories & Stitches: A Historical Quilt Exhibit*. This display features fifteen historic textiles from the Heritage Alliance's museum collection, ranging from the mid-1800s to the 1980s. *Stories & Stitches* will be on display at the McKinney Center from July 17 through August 7. Visitors can call the McKinney

Center at 423-753-0562 to schedule a private viewing of the quilts. There is also a digital version of the exhibit on our website.

Although a select number of these pieces have been displayed before, this exhibit is the first comprehensive showing of the Heritage Alliance's collection. Come and view these beautiful

textiles and learn more about local history and craftsmanship!

You can share your own, homemade quilts online through the McKinney Center's Facebook page. There will also be a Crazy Quilt inspired Try-It challenge, Story Times featuring books about quilts, and a historic quilt care video released by the Heritage Alliance on August 1st. Keep checking our social media to stay up to date!



## Heritage Alliance Board Member Feature: Pat Wolfe

In this new feature we will be highlighting Heritage Alliance Board of Trustee members. As an organization we rely not only on our volunteers and members, but also on the contributions and support of our Board. Our second feature in this series is on Heritage Alliance Treasurer Pat Wolfe.

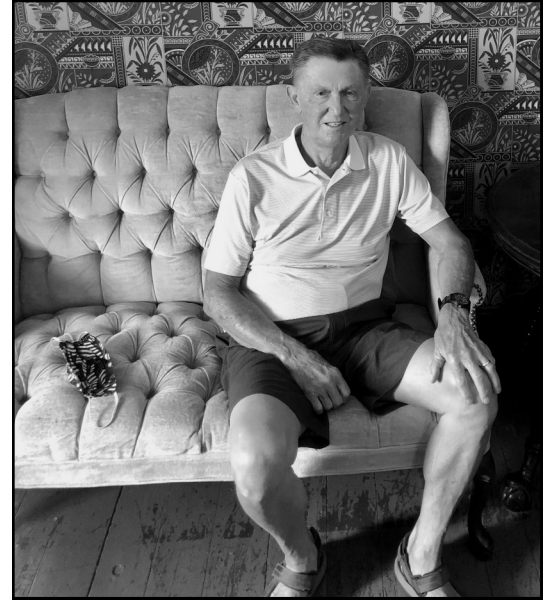
Former County Mayor George Jaynes put Pat on the Board in the early 2000s. He served on the Board with Bernard Kaiman and Dr. Kennedy. He was there when the Heritage Alliance expanded to become the Heritage Alliance of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. He's been serving the organization for almost 20 years.

Pat's favorite part of serving on the Board is the association he has formed with his fellow Board Members, the Executive Directors, and the Membership. He has enjoyed watching the level of interest for membership in the organization grow over the last 20 years.

Pat was a Washington County Commissioner for a number of years, and he's the go-to guy when it comes to officiating wedding ceremonies. He has averaged 320 wedding ceremonies a year since 2016. He also enjoys spending time with

his wife Becky and their children and grandchildren.

Pat grew up in the area. He left home to serve his country in the Army, but then he relocated to the family farm in 1993. He believes people should get involved with the Heritage Alliance because they need to be aware of their past, and we all need to work together to help preserve that past.



*Pat Wolfe at the Duncan House.*

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

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Jonesborough, TN 37659  
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[www.linnaeagardens.com](http://www.linnaeagardens.com)

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+1 (423) 794-0246  
[www.gracemeadowsfarmtn.com/](http://www.gracemeadowsfarmtn.com/)

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



## From the Director's Desk

Dear members, first off, I hope all of you are doing well. 2020 has not been an easy year, to put it mildly, but I am proud of my staff for rising to the challenge. Every week they come up with new ideas and new ways to share history in this ever changing world. We are fortunate that during this time we have had the unwavering support of our Board and of you, our dear members. You have renewed your dues, attended our virtual programming, shared our posts, and offered your support in numerous ways.

We are fortunate, too, that the Heritage Alliance recently received a Cares Act grant through Humanities Tennessee. This grant helps with expenses during this difficult time when revenue is down. Thanks to this grant, Megan has been able to continue her "Homecooked History" web series, and we are busy working on digital components to go along with our museum exhibits.

Although we have been very lucky, the Heritage Alliance is not out of the woods yet. We have had to adapt our new fundraising event, "Taste of Tennessee," to an online format, due to public health concerns. We are confident the digital version will be well received, but unfortunately we expect it to generate less revenue than a physical event. We are also not sure what form *A Spot on the Hill* and the Progressive Dinner

will take this year. Any support you can continue to give, whether it is by renewing your dues or offering a kind word, is very much appreciated. We would also like to encourage you to reach out if there are any ideas, digital programs, online events, or remote exhibits that you would like to see in the coming months. Our continued goal is to provide quality content that engages our community, especially during this difficult time. We hope to respond to your needs and desires, just as you have responded to ours.

In light of current events, and in response to critical conversations that are happening across the museum field, as well as our larger society, there is another initiative on which I would like to focus. This initiative revolves around ensuring, to the best of our ability, the accurate and complete representation of the people of Washington County, as well as their histories, in our museums, exhibits, and programs. Like other history organizations, the Heritage Alliance has fallen short of our mission, and missed key opportunities, to tell the entire story of our region and all of the people that lived, and continue to live, in it. Years ago, a black male visitor walked into the Chester Inn Museum and, after spending time amongst the exhibits, remarked, "I don't see myself here." That comment illustrated the fact that there have



been, and continue to be, notable absences within our museum, and that we as an organization need to do more in order to properly represent the people, histories, and experiences of all Washington County residents. His words have remained with me ever since.

This problem is not common to our organization alone. Most museums and historical societies struggle with inclusivity, and it's an issue that has deep roots in this country. After all, who started the preservation movement in this country, and what stories did they choose to tell? Recent studies have found that museums are a trusted news source, more so than the news on television or in print, and that is a sacred, public trust. In order to uphold this public trust, we have to do better.

Thank you for trusting me to lead our organization. I promise to do my best to respond to the important challenges listed above, as well as whatever hardships may emerge in the future. I, as well as my staff, are excited to embrace these opportunities to make the Heritage Alliance more responsive, engaged, collaborative, and reflective than ever before. I look forward to working with you all to make that vision a reality.





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Jonesborough, TN 37659

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HA Office Phone: 423-753-9580  
Chester Inn Museum: 423-753-4580  
**[www.heritageall.org](http://www.heritageall.org)**  
**[info@heritageall.org](mailto:info@heritageall.org)**

*The Chester Inn State Historic Site &  
Museum is funded under an agreement  
with the Tennessee Department of  
Environment and Conservation,  
Tennessee Historic Commission.*

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Chester Inn Museum: Joe Spiker  
[chesterinn@heritageall.org](mailto:chesterinn@heritageall.org)

Programming Coordinator: Megan Cullen  
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Smith



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