



The Link



preserving our heritage and building a future together

Volume 20, Number 1

Spring 2021

Heritage Alliance Celebrates 20th Anniversary

It's hard to believe, but the Heritage Alliance is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2021! The success of this non-profit organization is thanks to the strong foundation set by the Civic Trust, the Historic Jonesborough Foundation, and the friends of the Jonesborough & Washington County History Museum (JWCHM).

This celebration is also thanks to YOU, our Members, our Volunteers, and our Community. Your support of the Alliance is why we are still here offering programs and doing the work we do, whether it's preserving a

building or educating a school group.

We have several celebratory offerings planned this year. You may have already seen our monthly articles in the *Herald & Tribune* as well as our archival photos. We're very thankful for that opportunity. A museum exhibit is planned for the fall for the JWCHM, and we're working on a festive, outside gathering later this year where we can all safely celebrate since our January potluck was postponed. We'll release more information as it becomes available. In the meantime, please reach out to us with

ideas, memories, thoughts, and more. As members of this organization, as members of this community, as volunteers, this is your organization, too. What would you like to see the Heritage Alliance achieve in the next 20 years?



This special logo was created for us by the Herald & Tribune.

Summer Suppers: Enjoy a Lovely Meal on a Historic Lawn

We're excited to launch a new event and fundraiser in 2021! Summer Suppers will run from May to September with five, intimate dinners offered on the lawn of a historic home in Jonesborough. Each event will have a three course meal, live music, and a chance to tour parts of the home and grounds. We couldn't think of a better way to spend a summer evening.

The first Summer Supper will take place on Saturday, May 22nd at

Febuary Hill. Dinner will be served at 6:00 pm. Tickets for the event are \$45.00 per person. This includes the food, drinks, entertainment, and tour. Proceeds from the Suppers will help fund the educational programs of the Heritage Alliance. Tickets will be available to purchase for the May Summer Supper, and all following Summer Suppers, through the Town of Jonesborough's ticketing system starting Thursday, April 15th. There are only 26 tickets

available per supper, so make sure you purchase your tickets early.

May 22 : Febuary Hill

June 12: Spring St Home

July 24: Warner Institute

August 14: Historic Embree Farm

September 18: Lyon/Adams Home on E Main St



Chester Inn Kicks-Off 2021 Season with New Exhibits

The Chester Inn Museum is now open, and visitors can expect to find two new exhibits on display.

The first exhibit is “Black in Appalachia: African American History in Kingsport,” a travelling exhibit on loan from the Kingsport Archives. They partnered with the group Black in Appalachia to compile a 10-panel exhibit covering five different aspects of African American life in Kingsport. The exhibit explores the roles that community leaders and organizations played in shaping the African American experience in the city. It will be on display through July 4th.

The second exhibit is “From Here to There: A Brief History of

Transportation in Jonesborough.” This exhibit features archival photographs and artifacts relating to the different eras of transportation throughout Jonesborough’s history. It traces the evolution of travel from horse and carriage through railroad and automobile, and explores the impact that carriage, railroad, and air travel had on the area.

The museum opened on Monday, March 1st, and is operating under its normal spring hours. In March and April the museum will be open on Fridays, Saturdays, and Mondays from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm, on Sundays from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm, and will be closed on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. There is no admission

price, but there is a suggested \$2 donation per visitor. We recommend that visitors wear face coverings while visiting the museum and can provide one for a \$1 donation. Keep up to date with the museum by following the Chester Inn on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube!



“Black in Appalachia: African American History in Kingsport” is on display through July 5th

TAM Awards: They Like Us! They Really Like Us!

We are so proud of the award-winning work that Heritage Alliance staff members have produced this past year. On March 17, 2021, the Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM) recognized Joe Spiker, Head Docent at the Chester Inn Museum and State Historic Site, and Megan Cullen Tewell, Programming Coordinator at The Heritage Alliance, who were honored with Awards of Excellence for recent programs and exhibitions.

Spiker received an Award of Excellence in the AV Film/ Documentary Series category for the web series, “With the Victorians.” The Chester Inn was also

recognized in the Temporary Exhibit category for the virtual exhibit, “If You Don’t Watch Out: The Influenza Pandemic in and Around Washington County, September 1918 to February 1919.” Tewell was commended for her work on the Homecooked History web series in the Video/ Blog category. *A Taste of Tennessee: A Community Curated Cookbook* received an award in the Publication category as well.

The Heritage Alliance is no stranger to commendation, having received numerous awards from TAM in the past. However, these recent recognitions take on

additional meaning and significance in light of the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic, and the challenges that it has created. Regardless, Heritage Alliance staff continue to produce quality programming, materials, and experiences that share local history with the community—and now they have the certificates to prove it.

You can catch both Homecooked History and “With the Victorians” on the Chester Inn YouTube channel, and the virtual flu exhibit on the Heritage Alliance website. You can also contact the Heritage Alliance for a copy of *A Taste of Tennessee* cookbook. Congratulations to our winners!



"Under the Big Top": A New Exhibit Comes To Town

On August 8, 1928, in anticipation of the arrival of the John Robinson Circus to the area, the *Johnson City Staff News* published the memories of several local citizens who had visited the same circus fifty years before.

A Johnson City resident attended the circus in Jonesborough in 1870: "My father took my brother and me to the show and I remember he picked me up in his arms to see one of the zebras and brother began crying." David E. Fine also visited the circus in Jonesborough with his father in the early 1870s. "I saw the elephants being watered and many of the boys were feeding them candy," Fine remembered.

Memories like these will be featured in an upcoming circus exhibit at the Jonesborough/Washington County Museum, set to debut in late March 2021. The exhibit will recount the history of circuses in the region, particularly during the 19th and 20th centuries. It will also examine the influence these events had both nationally and locally. Unfortunately, you

cannot bring peanuts or popcorn into the museum, but the exhibit (curated by Megan Cullen Tewell, Programming Coordinator at the Heritage Alliance) promises to excite audiences, who will encounter performers like high-wire artist Tetu Robinson and the celebrated clown, Lolo.

We know that the circus conjures a range of memories & emotions, not all of which are pleasant. While providing entertainment to some, the circus could also be cruel & unjust to animals, its performers, and its staff. It is our goal to objectively research & present this part of Washington County's story.

The museum was originally supposed to receive a moderate remodel during the spring of 2021, as reported in a previous newsletter. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other unexpected factors, those renovations have been postponed. But, this exhibit offers guests a new and compelling reason for visiting the museum, and learning about life "under the big top."



Image from the Johnson City Staff News, 8/30/1926

Chuckey Depot Museum

"As Fast As Birds Can Fly"
East TN & Western NC "Tweetsie"
Railroad Special Exhibit



Museum located
on Second
Avenue. Open
Thursday-Sunday
from 1:00-4:00

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History Happy Hour Fifth Anniversary

The Chester Inn's award-winning speaker series History Happy Hour is returning for a fifth year!

Each presentation is on the third Thursday at 6:30 pm each month from March through November. Presentations may be virtual or in-person, and specifics for each presentation will be available as the scheduled dates approach. "We were really fortunate to transition last year's schedule to a virtual series," Spiker says. "This

year we are taking things on a month-by-month basis, especially early on. The best way to remain current on program information is on the Chester Inn's Facebook page." Each presentation is free and open to the public.

This year's program features returning favorites as well as new presenters. Dr. Angela Keaton from Tusculum, Dr. Rene Rodgers from the Birthplace of Country Music Museum, and

alumni from the Langston Centre highlight speakers returning to the series for another year. New organizations represented this year include the Cedar Grove Foundation in Elizabethton, Lees McRae College in Banner Elk, N.C., and both the Craft Beverage Institute and Museum in North Carolina.

The full schedule and program updates can be found at www.heritageall.org and on the Chester Inn's Facebook page.

History Trivia Night Returns April 22nd

Teams (of up to six people) can register for this Zoom trivia experience up until the evening of the event, which kicks off at 7:00 pm and lasts approximately 1 to 1.5 hours.

Teams test their knowledge of general historic trivia and compete to answer a variety of questions. Prizes are awarded to

the top three teams, and past rewards have included gift certificates from local businesses. The cost is \$5 per team, although additional donations are appreciated.

Joe Spiker and Megan Cullen Tewell host this riotously fun event that combines entertainment, education, and engagement. Register to play at heritageall.org!

Your hosts:



Megan Tewell



Joe Spiker

2021 Town Tour Schedule Announced

The Heritage Alliance's Historic Strolling Tour season kicked off on March 6th!

This year, the Heritage Alliance will be giving historic strolling tours of Jonesborough every Saturday at 1:00 pm from March through December. Town tour tickets are \$5.00 and are available at the Chester Inn Museum.

The popular Mythbusting and Railroad tours will not be part of

the regular schedule. However, they might be offered during special, Town events and by request appointment only. A decision will be made regarding summer evening tours later this year.

Old Jonesborough Cemetery Tours return on June 5th and run through October 2nd. Cemetery tours will be given on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays each month at 2:30

pm. Tickets are \$3.00 and also available at the Chester Inn. Town and Cemetery combo tour tickets are also available for \$7.00.

Town tours are currently limited to a 10-person capacity. Contact the Heritage Alliance to reserve a spot on a tour or to purchase your ticket in advance. You can also book a tour for a larger group or request a tour on another date! Follow the Heritage Alliance online for tour schedule updates!



Volunteer Spotlight: Hannah Bitner

For this edition of the newsletter, we're proud to highlight Chester Inn Museum (CIM) volunteer docent Hannah Bitner!

What's your role with the Heritage Alliance?

My volunteer role is as a docent at CIM (pre-covid, anyway), and I've been helping out since 2014.

How did you get involved with the Chester Inn Museum?

I got involved with the museum through an article in the newspaper asking for volunteers. I'd never been in the museum before that.

What is your favorite part about volunteering at the museum?

My favorite part about volunteering at CIM is meeting all the people who stop in. I've

given upstairs tours with guests from New York State, North Carolina, and North Dakota all in the same group. I've even had people visiting from Spain and England. I also love that I get to be a visitor at the same time and check out the new exhibits.

Why should people get involved with the Heritage Alliance?

People should get involved with the Heritage Alliance because we have a history worth preserving and sharing! We have some of the most colorful storytellers in the country right here, and many will stop by on a Sunday afternoon and share some tales as they explore the museum.

Tell us a little bit about Hannah outside of the museum.

I'm from Chuckey. I love the outdoors, photography, and travel. And I've worked as a

medical technologist for the past 11 years.

Hannah had to take a step back from the museum this past year due to the pandemic because she was busy working on the frontlines to help keep us safe and take care of patients. We thank her and all of our health care workers for the sacrifices they've made. We can't wait to have Hannah back at the museum again!



Volunteer Hannah Bitner

Heritage Alliance Board Member Feature: Tom Krieger

We're pleased to highlight Board of Trustee Member Tom Krieger in this edition of The Link.

How long have you been a Board Member of the Heritage Alliance?

I'm now in my 6th year as a Board Member. I was drawn to the Alliance because of the mission to perpetuate the history of the past and the way it ties into our world today. I have an

inherent interest in the history of a given town or region as I was born and grew up in the tiny (500+) town of Mount Pleasant, Ohio, which was established in 1803. The town was a part of the Underground Railroad and had at least 5 homes that harbored slaves as they were fleeing to the safety of Canada. In 1814 the Historic Quaker Meeting House was built in Mount Pleasant. It was the first Quaker Church west of the Allegheny Mountains, then in

1817, Quaker Charles Osborne established "The Philanthropist" in Mount Pleasant which was the first newspaper in the country to advocate the abolition of slavery.

What's your favorite memory of working with the Heritage Alliance?

My special memory of serving with the Heritage Alliance is having served on the Board as the organization has matured and

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improved operationally, establishing specific agendas plans, and goals. The organization has grown professionally and continues to stretch to present more of the history of the region, establishing numerous presentations, re-n-a-c-t-m-e-n-t-s, and acknowledgements of those who were the proactive citizens of the region in the past.

What are your hobbies?

My hobbies are volunteering as a board member for numerous charitable agencies in our area, serving my church (Central Baptist in J.C), Biblical Study, and light farming on our Jonesborough farm.

How long have you lived in the area?

I moved to this area in 1987 as the President of Fleming Foods of Tennessee after serving with that company in Atlanta, GA, and Columbus, GA. Prior to that I served with Food Lion Stores for 10 years and with the Kroger Company for 23 years. Having lived in numerous locations such as Toledo, Chagrin Falls, Akron, and Solon, Ohio, Kansas City, Little Rock, St. Louis, and Salisbury, NC, I joyously adopted Jonesborough as my forever home. I met and married my wife of 29 years (Becky Hodges) here and we purchased her Grandparent's farm in 1991.

Why should people support the Heritage Alliance by becoming a member or volunteering their time?

I believe it is incumbent for the citizens of our town and region to support the Heritage Alliance as they establish programs and renovate facilities that connect us to our heritage. Even if a person didn't grow up in this region, there is still a connectivity between our past, their past, and the future.



Board Member Tom Krieger

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www.linnaeagardens.com

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





From the Director's Desk:

At the Annual Meeting, I share the "State of the Alliance," a brief speech where I highlight all the many accomplishments the organization, our Staff, Members, and our Volunteers made the previous year. As you all know, the ongoing pandemic kept us from gathering in person this January, but I still wanted to share some of that information with you. Looking back on 2020, surviving in general feels like a major accomplishment in itself. We at the Heritage Alliance are very fortunate for the support of our Members and our Community. You checked in on us, you reached out to us, you shared our social media posts, and you donated your hard earned money to help us fill the gaps that were created by lost revenue from canceled programs.

Even though our buildings were closed for a time last year, the Heritage Alliance never stopped working. We created new, virtual programs and educational experiences. I am beyond proud of my staff. With their minds and efforts, we hosted our first Virtual Field Trip day and created award-winning web series like Homecooked History and "With the Victorians." We created so many digital exhibits that we now have a separate digital exhibit hall on the Heritage Alliance's website. Every program we could reformat, we did, and then some.

That's not to say we didn't do anything in person last year, because we still managed to serve over 15,000 people face to face. At all times, we followed CDC guidelines and kept the safety of our staff, volunteers, visitors, and community in mind. For the first time ever, we put all of our quilts and coverlets on display at the McKinney Center in "Stories & Stitches." We also celebrated the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment with two exhibits in the Jonesborough & Washington County History Museum.

Our volunteers donated over 1,700 hours of their time last year. That is generous at any point, but especially during a global crisis. Volunteers who did not feel comfortable returning to public positions helped us behind the scenes by scanning photos in our archival collection and inventorying historic scrapbooks.

In addition to the pandemic, 2020 encouraged us to take stock in another way. It reminded us that as historians and preservationists, we need to look at whose history we're sharing in our museums, whose history are we preserving. Whose voices are we missing? Whose voices are we not listening to as loudly as others? In response to these

questions and our self reflection, the Heritage Alliance partnered with the McKinney Center and the Langston Centre to create a Racial/Social Justice Resource Sheet that is housed on our website. We are currently partnering with them and the Africana Studies program at ETSU headed by Dr. Daryl Carter, to create a workshop series called "Useable Past." The goal of this series is to share ways in which we can all work to create a more inclusive, equitable, and welcoming environment in our region. The first workshop is set for Thursday, April 29th and includes Alicia Phelps from Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association, Dr. Candace Forbes Bright from ETSU, and William Isom from Black in Appalachia. This first workshop will focus on inclusive tourism. You can register for the event through the McKinney Center's website.

There is a lot of work still to be done, but it is good work, and it is important work. A big welcome to our newest Board Member Fred Counts, and a welcome back to our returning Board Member Mike Floyd. 2021 comes with its own challenges and promise. With your support, we will continue to rise to meet them.

USEABLE PAST: ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Free Online Workshop
April 29, 9 am
Register for the zoom link at
McKinneyCenter.com

Featuring Alicia Phelps, NETTA
William Isom, Black in Appalachia
& Candace Forbes Bright, ETSU





212 East Sabin Dr.
Jonesborough, TN 37659

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Historic Commission.*

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Programming Coordinator: Dr. Megan
Cullen Tewell
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Oak Hill School: Deanna Carey and Jean
Smith



*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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