



# The Link



*preserving our heritage and building a future together*

Volume 21, Number 1

Spring 2022

## 2022 Taste of Tennessee Appalachian Foodways Festival



The “Taste of Tennessee” festival is coming to Jonesborough! After one pandemic pivot to virtual in 2020 and a pandemic related cancellation in 2021, the Heritage Alliance is set to debut the first in-person Appalachian foodways festival. Taking place from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, Taste of Tennessee offers a celebration of

regional food-based history, heritage, and culture (past and present). Complete with vendors, demonstrations, lectures, and musical performances, the festival is family-friendly and community oriented. “We’re trying to bring folks together across a metaphorical table, connecting over the dishes and traditions that contribute to Appalachian culture,” says Megan Cullen Tewell, Programming Coordinator at the Heritage Alliance. Merging education, entertainment, and good eats, Taste of Tennessee will take place in downtown historic Jonesborough. You can learn more about Taste of Tennessee at our Facebook page,

@TastyTennessee, and at the Heritage Alliance’s website, [www.heritageall.org](http://www.heritageall.org). Mark your calendars today!



## “They Like Us, They Really Like Us!”: HA Receives TAM Awards

After a three-year delay, the Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM) hosted their annual conference in Kingsport, Tennessee over a three-day period in March. In addition to Kingsport and Bristol, museum professionals from across Tennessee also visited historic Jonesborough, enjoying the numerous downtown sights and activities, including the Chester Inn Museum and the McKinney Center. During Awards Night, Heritage Alliance staff members walked away with multiple

commendations recognizing their outstanding work throughout 2021. Executive Director Anne G’Fellers Mason was honored with an Award of Excellence for her originally researched and written play, “Nancy,” about an enslaved woman owned by self-proclaimed abolitionist Elihu Embree. The play was also nominated, along with a select few, for a prestigious Past Presidents’ Award, alongside other prominent museums and history

institutions across the state. Programming Coordinator Megan Cullen Tewell also received an Award of Excellence for the temporary exhibit, “The Noblest Art: A Local History of the Circus,” displayed in the Jonesborough/Washington County History Museum at the Jonesborough Visitors Center and Emporium. Joe Spiker, former Head Docent at the Chester Inn Museum and State Historic Site, accepted an Award of Excellence for his online video series, “Exhibit Extras,” offering a behind-the-



*TAM Awards, continued from page one.*

scenes look at museum exhibit-making. To make the night even more special, our very own Charlene Cleveland received an Award of Excellence for her volunteer work at the Chester Inn State Historic Site & Museum. Charlene has been with the Chester Inn Museum since it opened in the fall of 2011.

Lastly, the Heritage Alliance, along with the McKinney Center and our other partners, received an Award of Excellence for the online workshop series, "Useable Past," scheduled for additional dates throughout 2022. Congratulations to Heritage Alliance staff and volunteers, past and present, for their continued excellence in the field of museums and public history!



*Heritage Alliance former staff member Joe Spiker, volunteer Charlene Cleveland, Programming Coordinator Dr. Megan Tewell, and Executive Director Anne Mason pose with their TAM Awards at the McKinney Center.*

## Picnicking with History: New Event on May 21st

Get close with local history on Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> as the Heritage Alliance hosts "Picnicking with History" at the Embree House Historic Farm in Telford. This event will include a tour of three historic homes and a chance to have a picnic lunch on the grounds. Tickets include the tour as well as a special period appropriate tasty treat at each of the houses, and a boxed, picnic lunch from Main Street Café.

The tour will start at the Embree House. Built in the 1790s by Seth Smith, this stone house was the childhood home of Elihu Embree, publisher and editor of *The Emancipator*, the first periodical in the world dedicated solely to the cause of abolitionism. Guests will have a chance to tour the original great room in the house as well as

the enslaved quarters in the lower level where the enslaved people worked and lived. From there, guests will have a chance to tour portions of the Wassom House, an 1820s brick home that is currently being restored. The tour will conclude at the Kyker House, a 1950s home. It's not every day that you get a chance to tour three different homes from three different centuries. The Embree House and the Wassom House are both listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Kyker House received a Preservation Award from the Heritage Alliance.

The site as a whole is managed by Patrick Stern and is used for agrotourism. The event will conclude with a picnic lunch at the Embree House on the grounds where the Indigenous Peoples once lived

and a Civil War battle was fought in 1863. Please note that these are historic houses and they include stairs, uneven ground, and tight spaces. During lunch, guests will have a chance to explore the grounds at the Embree House. Good walking shoes are required for this event.

There are four tour and lunch slots available on May 21<sup>st</sup> at 11:30 am, 1:00 pm, 2:30 pm, and 4:00 pm. There are only 20 tickets available per slot, so make sure you book your tickets fast. The cost is \$30.00 per person. This event is a unique fundraiser for the Heritage Alliance and the proceeds will help keep our museums free to the public. You can purchase tickets online through the Town of Jonesborough's ticketing system at [jonesborough.com/tickets](https://jonesborough.com/tickets). You can also call the Visitor's Center at 423.753.1010.



## Meet Ian Kirkpatrick, Project Archivist for TSLA Grant

Ian Kirkpatrick joined our staff in January of this year as a contracted Project Archivist for our Tennessee State Library and Archives grant. He has been hard at work digitizing and uploading our archival photos to our SentryFile database. This same database will be available to the public to search and interact with later this year. We asked Ian some questions.

**What excites you about the project?** It's really cool to be able to get to know Jonesborough better through these photos. Not only do I get to see how the town has grown and changed over the years, but I also get to see the people who implemented the mechanisms for that growth and change. I'm proud to identify and preserve their voices and amplify the local history that makes Jonesborough so well-known.

**What have you learned while on the job?** I am learning how to navigate the Pastperfect and Sentryfile operating systems, how to properly care for old artifacts, and how to present those artifacts to the public in a conscious and ethical way. These will be very useful skills in my future endeavors, and I appreciate the Heritage Alliance for allowing me the opportunity to learn.

**How do you think the public will benefit from having access to these photos and information?** These photos are treasures for a family genealogist who may find a family member among the collection. Further, they give a sense of the fashion of the eras in which they were taken and serve as a visual representation of the layout of the town over time. Anyone interested in research-

ing an accurate portrayal of the local community can benefit from these images. I can't wait to see what projects and events are supported by this work!

**People might know you from the McKinney Center, but what's one thing about you that people probably don't know?** I don't own any pets because I am too busy to take care of one and I don't have enough space in my apartment. But growing up, I was always really good with animals - except for the English Mastiffs my grandfather raised. I tell people I am fine with dogs, just not big dogs! They're usually surprised when I tell them a golden retriever is not a big dog.

**What is one of your future goals, or what do you want your career to look like?** I want to continue to work with the arts and local culture of Appalachia in whatever form that may come to me. These last few years have taught me the right opportunity will come at the right time and to be ready when it does. For that reason, I am keeping my career goals as broad as possible. I'm just as interested to see where I end up as you are!

This project is funded under a Grant from the State of Tennessee. Look for Ian's weekly photo pick (Ian's "Pic Pick" of the Week) on our social media pages. Sadly, his grant contract ends on May 31st.



*Ian at work in the archives.*





## Cedar Grove Community Stories on Display at Chester Inn Museum

In our second exhibition with the Cedar Grove Foundation Inc., Elizabethton's only African-American historical organization, we invite you to explore new chapters of Cedar Grove's history. As you come to the end of the Jonesborough timeline exhibit, you are greeted by three cases. Peering into the first case, you are greeted by an image of David Brooks. Mr. Brooks and his family were some of the earliest to settle in what would become known as the "Cedar Grove Community." Mr. Brooks enlisted in the 1st United States Colored Heavy Artillery (USCHA.) As a Freedman, he served until the war's end.

Throughout the community's history, numerous individuals from Cedar Grove have served in the Armed Forces, despite encountering racism and hardships. Continuing this narrative, the next two cases provide further context of military service by members from Cedar Grove. Lt. Dempsey W. Morgan, Jr. flew 181 missions in World War II. Serving as a member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen, Lt. Morgan garnered awards for his time in the European Theater that include the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Bronze Star. In this case is a signed canteen. Enhancing the case is an image of Lt. Morgan handing the signed WWII canteen to



the Cedar Grove Foundation's director and founder, Jacey Augustus.

Our last story of military service occupies the case adjacent to Lt. Morgan. Again, you are greeted by a photograph. It is a young man in a suit donning a fedora. The face is innocent, boyish, and in no way conveys the hardships this man endured. Harry Leon Wilson joined the U.S. Army in February 1950. Only 17 years old, he needed parental consent to serve. His parents granted the request and Private Wilson soon found himself on the battlefields of the Korean War. During heavy fighting in the north, Pvt. Wilson was captured on November 27, 1950. It was during his imprisonment that Pvt. Wilson made the ultimate sacrifice, dying in POW Camp Number 5. In recognition of his heroism, he was posthumously awarded a recognition of gratitude by the State of Tennessee in 2007. The remaining two cases tell about service of another kind, the service of educators and the churches in the Cedar Grove Community.

The Douglas School's origins date to the 1890s, when it was a simple one-room schoolhouse. Despite being destroyed in 1901 during the Great Doe River Flood, the mission of the school endured. Championed by Rev. Breedlove, the school continued to serve the community in a growing capacity, offering high school classes to students beyond Elizabethton's city limits. The Douglas School, named after Frederick Douglas, operated until 1965 when the schools were integrated. The exhibit also includes the stories of Brown's Chapel AME Zion, St. Paul, and Phillippi Church. These three churches are still prominent in Elizabethton today.

The Heritage Alliance is honored to be able to partner with the Cedar Grove Foundation. Director Jacey Augustus says the foundation "is dedicated to collecting and preserving lost, rare, and unknown histories." The stories conveyed by this exhibit are a part of the vital fabric that holds the Cedar Grove Foundation together. That fabric grows stronger as more visitors come to learn and connect to the community's history.



## Meet Josh Dacey, Chester Inn Museum Site Manger



I grew up in a small mountain town at the foot of Blue Ridge. Tryon has no real claim to fame, other than being the birthplace of Nina Simone. I spent most of my childhood tramping through the woods chasing dinosaurs or vanquishing monsters. When my gallant services were not required or it was pouring rain, comic books took me to other worlds filled with heroes and adventure. We were not a sports family. My parents were fierce advocates of the written word. My sister and I anxiously awaited our weekly trips to the library. The smell is what I remember the most. Not musty. Not dusty. Old. I guess I have always been attracted to old things and old stories.

The first history book I stumbled across was, like many Southern historians, about the Civil War. I devoured everything I could find about the war. My parents and sister tolerated being dragged to reenactments on the weekends. When I was 13 my grandfather agreed to a two week

sojourn to visit every battlefield and fort as far north as Pennsylvania. Rambling around in his 25ft RV with his 31 pound cat, I was beyond the words in the books. I was there. It was on that trip that I realized my purpose in life, to work at one of these places.

The only subject that mattered to me in school from that point forward was history. It was my major in both undergraduate and graduate school, although it did take a turn my freshman year. That year I discovered the world of museum studies and public history. This led to a four year internship in the Special Collections and Archives at UNC Asheville. Honing my skills as a curator and exhibition designer, by the time I graduated, UNC Greensborough's Museum Studies Master's degree was in my sights. Joining a cohort of nine other history fanatics, we worked tirelessly, not only learning the academic skills but the personal skills of connecting with individuals and a community, the vital connections that are required to share an individual or a community's story with the world. Our crowning achievement at the end of those two years was a panel in the traveling "States of Incarceration" exhibition, the first and only exhibition to document the myriad problems with the U.S. prison system.

After graduation, I worked several years for North Carolina's Historic Sites Commission, creating programs and community engagement at the birthplace of a former governor. After meeting my wife, New Hampshire became our next destination. During my time with NC Historic Sites, I developed a passion for

historic farming methods, heirloom vegetables, and 19th century foodways. We found 12 acres and an 1882 farmhouse just outside Hanover. Farming itch scratched and after four years of brutal winters, my teaching contract at Dartmouth College was over. We packed up and returned south. Over the convening months, we bounced around as nomads until I landed a gig with the National Park Service at Shenandoah National Park in Virginia. A season of interpretation and hiking everyday restored a part of me that had gone dormant in the frigid New Hampshire cold. We also realized the South was truly our home. It is where our families live. It is where our history lives.

When I am not at the Chester Inn, I am usually gardening, cooking groovy vegan grub, writing, practicing my longbow skills, or brewing beer. Yes, I am still an avid bookworm and love comics. Our three dogs keep me on my toes and in shape as I chase them around the yard constantly.

The opportunity to join the Heritage Alliance family is certainly a highlight in my career. The constant support and unending encouragement, not to mention nerdy banter, are what makes this a joyful job. I hope to serve you all and the Jonesborough Community for years to come.

*(This article has been edited for length. Read the full version on our blog at [heritageall.org](http://heritageall.org).)*



## New Installment of Useable Past on May 18th

**USEABLE PAST  
WORKING, CLASS:  
APPALACHIAN LABOR AND  
ECONOMY**

Free Online Workshop  
May 18, 10am - 11:30 am  
Register for the zoom link at  
McKinneyCenter.com

Featuring: Shara Scarborough, writer and oral historian  
Emily Hudson, Executive Director of the Southeast Kentucky  
African-American Museum and Cultural Center  
Dr. Tom Lee, Associate Professor of History at ETSU

The ongoing program Useable Past is set to return this May! Hosted by the Heritage Alliance, the McKinney Center, the Langston Centre, and Black America Studies program at ETSU, Useable Past is an inter-institutional workshop series that focuses on the contemporary applications of African American history

and heritage. Following a warm reception in 2021, the first panel of 2022, entitled “Sites of Reconciliation: Empowerment through Challenging Histories,” took place in February of this year to great acclaim. We look forward to another successful event on Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 to 11:30 AM, welcoming an array of panelists to speak on our latest topic, “Working, Class: Appalachian Labor and Economy.”

Confirmed panelists include speakers from Eastern Kentucky and Southwest Virginia, actively engaged in

African American labor histories in Appalachia. Registration is free, and the public is welcome to attend! Help us to continue growing and expanding this award-winning program. You can learn more about Useable Past at our Facebook page, @useablepast, and at the Heritage Alliance’s website, [www.heritageall.org](http://www.heritageall.org).

Registration for the free event is available through the McKinney Center’s website. The event is presented using the Zoom platform.

## Nancy’s Story at Telford Ruritan Club on June 25th

Nancy was a mother and an enslaved woman owned by Elihu Embree, and her story will be shared at the Telford Ruritan Club on Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup> in the original play entitled “Nancy.”

Written by Anne G’Fellers-Mason, Executive Director of the Heritage Alliance, “Nancy” follows a year in the woman’s life, from January 1820 when Elihu Embree wrote his will to January 1821 when his will was read before the Washington County court. In his will, Embree tried to free Nancy and her five children, but were his wishes carried out? What was Nancy feeling and thinking during this time? The play is based on primary research relying heavily on documents from the Washington County Archives. The role of Nancy will be performed by local actress Ubunibi-Afia Short. “Nancy” won an

Award of Excellence from the Tennessee Association of Museums and has been performed twice in the region to sold-out crowds. Do not miss your chance to see this powerful performance.

“It is an honor to bring the show to the stage at the Telford Ruritan Club,” Executive Director Anne Mason says. “The Heritage Alliance is all about making connections with our community, and we are so glad we can do that through Nancy’s story.” There will be two performances on June 25<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm and 6:30 pm. The show is a fundraiser for the Telford Ruritan Club and the Heritage Alliance. The show will be performed onstage in the old Telford School located at 101 Telford School Road. Tickets are \$15.00 and can be purchased directly through the Town of Jonesborough’s ticketing system

at [Jonesborough.com/tickets](http://Jonesborough.com/tickets) or by calling the Jonesborough Visitor’s Center at 423.753.1010. Seating is limited to only 50 people per performance, so make sure you purchase your tickets in advance.

The Telford Ruritan Club has been serving their community since 1961. They host a BBQ supper on the second Friday of every month.



*Ubunibi-Afia Short as Nancy. Photo by Mark Larkey taken at Embree House Historic Farm.*







## From the Director's Desk:

New year, new faces, and new challenges. We may already be in April of 2022, but the Heritage Alliance is still embracing the new. After five years of working with us, Joe Spiker departed our staff in January. We wish him the best on his new endeavors, and we are excited to welcome Joshua Dacey as the new Site Manager of the Chester Inn State Historic Site and Museum. If you have not already, stop by the museum and say hello.

I'd also like to welcome our new Board Members, Charlene Cleveland and Meghan Kieta. I'm excited to work with them on the Board. They have both been involved with the organization for a number of years in various ways. In addition to new Trustees, we have a new President on our Board. Fred Counts has stepped up to assume the role that Gordon Edwards held for the past six years. We are all excited about the future. I want to thank Dan Eldridge and Tom Krieger for their time, dedication, and insight on our Board. It was an honor and a pleasure to work with both of them, and I know they will still be involved in the Heritage Alliance in some form or fashion. A

big thank you to Gordon Edwards for his six years of leadership. He oversaw a change in Executive Director, and a pandemic, no easy feat. You'll still see Gordon around at the Salvage Warehouse and in the Old Jonesborough Cemetery.

Thank you to our Members who voted in our second, virtual annual meeting that was conducted via email and snail mail. I've certainly missed our large gatherings and our potlucks, and I am excited to announce that our **20th Anniversary Potluck** will take place at **6:00 pm** on **Thursday, August 4th** at **Grace Meadows Farm**. Don't worry, we'll send out plenty of reminders, but go ahead and put that date on your calendar now.

Going forward this year, we're trying to balance the virtual with the in-person. 2020 taught us the importance of virtual, and we are becoming known for our digital programming, but people are coming back to our sites. We are overjoyed to have school groups in the schoolhouse, which has a nice, new coat of paint thanks to a preservation grant from the DAR. Finding a good balance between the two mediums of sharing history is difficult, especially with a small staff, but we are dedicated to presenting programs in both formats where and when we can. Our History Happy Hour will have a livestreaming option this season. (We hope we have the sound kinks worked out.) And we will continue with our videos on the Chester Inn Museum YouTube channel and our digital exhibits, which are viewable on our website.

Some of our new programs from 2021 are back for 2022. Last year we had five Summer Suppers, this year we have a special picnic in May and a Summer Supper on July 23rd on Spring Street at 6:30 pm. We're also

bringing our History Trivia Nights back and will have trivia at the Eureka Inn on May 27th, on Oak Hill School's lawn on June 24th, and at the Eureka Inn on July 22nd. It's only \$10.00 to register a team of up to six people, and you can do so on our website. The trivia nights are one of my favorite things to come out of 2021.

My other favorite things are the Useable Past series, which continues in May, and learning more about Nancy and sharing her story with the wider public. There will be more performances of Nancy's story this year, starting with our partnership with the Telford Ruritan Club on June 25th. If you have not seen this show and heard her story, I highly encourage you to do so. What else will 2022 bring? Let's find out together.

Extra! Extra! We had so much news, we weren't able to list our Business Members in this newsletter. Please look them up on our website and patronize them. Their support means a lot to us.

## History Happy Hour 2022

All programs at 6:30 pm at Chester Inn State Historic Site & Museum, Free & Open to Public

April 21st - "Shaker Dance at P.T. Barnum's American Museum" - Ashley Rattner, Tusculum Univ

**May 19th - Black in Appalachia - William Isom**

June 16th - Traditional Spoon Carving - Curtis Buchanan, Craftsman

**July 21st - Jonesborough's Brick Buildings, "Historic Beauties" - Dr. William Kennedy**

August 18th - Birthplace of Country Music Museum - Dr. Rene Rodgers

**September 15th - "Edison and the Origins of Recorded Sound" - Leonard Pipitone**

October 20th - Victorian Mourning Customs - Roberta Pipitone

**November 17th - From the Collections of The Reece Museum - Spenser Brenner, Mara Reynolds**

Speakers and topics subject to change. Stay up to date by visiting [heritageall.org](http://heritageall.org) & the Chester Inn Museum on Facebook. This project is funded under an agreement with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Tennessee Historical Commission





212 East Sabin Dr.  
Jonesborough, TN 37659

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President: Fred Counts, Johnson City  
Vice-President: Terry Countermine, Jonesborough  
Secretary: Hal Hunter., Johnson City  
Treasurer: Pat Wolfe, Telford  
Walter Buford, Jonesborough  
Charlene Cleveland, Jonesborough  
Mark Edmonds, Jonesborough  
Mike Floyd, Jonesborough  
Cari Jarman, Jonesborough  
Kati Jenkins, Jonesborough  
Meghan Kieta, Jonesborough  
Jack Van Zandt, Jonesborough

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 Museum is funded  
under an agreement with the  
Tennessee Department of Environ-  
ment and Conservation, Tennessee  
Historic Commission.*

Executive Director:: Anne G'Fellers-Mason  
[amason@heritageall.org](mailto:amason@heritageall.org)

Chester Inn Museum: Joshua Dacey  
[chesterinn@heritageall.org](mailto:chesterinn@heritageall.org)

Programming Coordinator: Dr. Megan  
Cullen Tewell  
[mtewell@heritageall.org](mailto:mtewell@heritageall.org)

Oak Hill School: Deanna Carey



*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!

Name: _____	<b>Membership Level</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> General \$50.00  <input type="checkbox"/> Business \$100.00	<b>Join a Circle!</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Pioneer \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> Franklin \$250 <input type="checkbox"/> Heritage \$500 <input type="checkbox"/> Founders \$1000
Address: _____		
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____		
Email: _____		

Memberships and donations to the Heritage Alliance are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. If you have questions concerning your contribution to the Alliance, please consult your tax advisor. No goods and/or services have been provided to the donor by the Heritage Alliance in consideration of this donation and membership.

Go online to [www.heritageall.org](http://www.heritageall.org) and join via PayPal  
or mail checks to Heritage Alliance 212 E. Sabin Dr.  
Jonesborough, TN 37659