



The Link



preserving our heritage and building a future together

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Spring 2023

Evening at the Museum on April 13th

The Heritage Alliance is excited to announce its next Open House! The event will take place at the Jonesborough & Washington County History Museum (inside of the Jonesborough Visitors Center) on Thursday, April 13 from 6:00 to 7:30 PM. Visitors are encouraged to attend in order to learn more about volunteer opportunities with the Heritage Alliance, particularly in the organization's museum and archival collection space. Current museum volunteers are engaged in a number of valuable projects, such as scanning historic photographs, transcribing letters, filling out object records, and more!

The Open House will also coincide with the official exhibit launch of *Eight Myths About Appalachia*, the museum's latest display which premiered in December 2022. Researched and written by Dr. Megan Cullen Tewell, outgoing Programming Coordinator, the exhibit addresses the historical origins and ongoing legacies of stereotypes surrounding Appalachia and its inhabitants.

This "evening at the museum" offers a chance for folks to come see a great new exhibit, learn more about the Heritage Alliance, and experience light refresh-

ments, as well as live entertainment, provided by local bluegrass duo, The Bluebirds. No RSVP is necessary, just mark your calendars for this fun and festive event. We look forward to seeing you there!



Eight Myths on display in the JWCHM.

Picnicking with History on May 13th at Knob Creek



Get close with local history on Saturday, May 13th as the Heritage Alliance hosts its second annual "Picnicking with History" at the Knob Creek Historical Museum in Johnson City. Last year the picnic took us to Telford. This year, we're

visiting one of Johnson City's oldest communities. This event will include a tour of the historic grounds and buildings and a chance to have a picnic lunch on the lawn. Tickets include the tour, admission to the museum, and a boxed lunch from Main Street Café.

The site was home to George and Margaret Holley. They were instrumental in preserving local history, especially the history of the Knob Creek Community. They started the museum and today their daughter Deanna Carey cares for the

collection of thousands of artifacts. Please note that these are historic buildings and they include stairs, uneven ground, and tight spaces. Good walking shoes are required for this event. "This is the perfect event for Mother's Day weekend," says Heritage Alliance Executive Director Anne Mason. "Bring mom out for a lovely picnic and some fascinating history." This event will also be a chance to see the Knob Creek Museum before it opens for its 2023 season.

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Picnicking cont.

There are four tour and lunch slots available on May 13th at 11:30 pm, 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 educational programs of the Heritage Alliance and the Knob Creek Historical Museum. 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.

MEMBER DISCOUNT: Members can contact the Heritage Alliance and get a Member Discount of \$25.00 a ticket. You must contact the Heritage Alliance directly for the discount.

Article Image from the Knob Creek Historical Museum's website.



In 1820, Elihu Embree wrote *The Emancipator*. Nancy was his enslaved woman. We know his story. What about hers?

Nancy

An original, award-winning play by
Anne G'Fellers-Mason

Saturday, June 24th at 2:00 pm & 6:30 pm
Embree House Historic Farm in Telford
Tickets \$25.00 through [Jonesborough.com/tickets](https://jonesborough.com/tickets)
Proceeds benefit the educational programs of the Heritage Alliance and the Embree House. Event includes tour of parts of the Embree House.

Call 423-753-9580 or email info@heritageall.org if you have questions. Background image from Embree's will in the Washington County Archives.

The award-winning play Nancy is back at the Embree House Historic Farm on June 24th with two performances.

Member Discount:
Contact the Heritage Alliance directly to secure your discount of \$20.00 a ticket.

New Exhibit at the Chuckey Depot Museum

The Chuckey Depot Museum continues its celebration of Black History Month (February) and Women's History Month (March) with its latest exhibit, *Our Work, Our Stories: African Americans, Women, and the Railroad*, which debuted on March 11, 2023.

This latest installment, part of an ongoing collaboration between The Heritage Alliance and the Watauga Valley Railroad Association, celebrates the accomplishments and contributions of numerous women and African Americans throughout railroad history. As inventors, workers, administrators, engineers, and more, these individuals helped to operate, maintain, and expand the railroad industry in meaningful ways.

"We wanted to highlight the accomplishments and the inventions and all the very creative developments that both of these groups of folks did for the railroad industry," said Rick Chinouth, Chair of the Exhibit's Subcommittee. *Our Work, Our Stories* encompasses a broad timeline and pulls historical narratives from across the United States. Featuring informative panels, as well as archival artifacts and 3-D objects, visitors can learn more about a variety of names and events, such as Pullman Porters, "Gandy Dancers," "Harvey Girls," and the railroad during World War II.

The Chuckey Depot Museum is located at 110 South 2nd Avenue in

downtown Jonesborough. The Depot's current hours are Thursday thru Sunday, 1 PM – 5 PM (except Saturday, 11 AM – 5 PM). For more information, please call 423.753.1010.



Photo by Nora Davis.



Volunteer Spotlight: Patricia Stern



The last time we featured long-time volunteer Patricia Stern, she was a board member and she was managing the Architectural Salvage Warehouse. Now she works with Dona Lewis on the Progressive Dinner. We decided to catch back up with her.

Where are you from? What brought you to the area?

I was born, raised, and married in Cleveland, Ohio. After my husband finished medical school we were stationed in San Antonio, TX, and Honolulu with the US Air Force before returning to Cleveland for 3 years. My husband grew up in Alabama and never

got used to the Cleveland winters so we then moved to Little Rock, AR, for 18 years. Well, I never got used to the hot Arkansas summers so when our last child graduated high school we decided to move more toward the east coast. We fell in love with the gorgeous mountains, very pleasant climate, the genuinely friendly people, local history, and the homey feel of NE TN. Thankfully, a position in the Department of Pediatrics at ETSU's medical school was offered to my husband which made the move possible!

What inspired you to get involved with the Heritage Alliance?

My husband met Dona at the library where she volunteered and she asked if we wanted to help with the Progressive Dinner (PD) at the soup house. It was such a fun and wonderful experience and we met a lot of people. A couple of years later we were asked if one of us would like to be on the board of the HA and I said I would like that.

How would you describe your volunteer role? What do you enjoy about it?

While on the board I volunteered to oversee the PD and have been doing it ever since. I look forward to it every year, working with HA staff and Dona and the opportunity of meeting so many new people. I have

always enjoyed entertaining at home and working on the PD with Dona is like doing all the fun parts of that!

When you're not volunteering for the Heritage Alliance, what are you interested in?

I work with my daughter Ginine making wedding cakes. It is a huge positive experience. Not only does it allow me to spend time with her and my granddaughters, but as I get older it keeps me active and productive. Other than that, having 17 grandchildren ages 9 through 25 provides plenty of interests, travel and fun!

What is your favorite historical period? What makes it your favorite?

I enjoy all history but I think my favorite is American history during the mid-19th century through mid-20th century. I probably like it the most because it relates the most to my life and that of my family. Learning of the way life was for my great, great grandparents to the time I can remember things for myself is just fascinating to me.

Continued on page 4.

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

Embree House Wedding Cakes & Historic Farm, *The Herald & Tribune*, Jonesborough Genealogical Society, Law Offices of Edmonds & Edmonds, Law Offices of James R. Wheeler, Linnaea Gardens, Main Street Café & Catering, MEK Restoration (Historical Restoration & Carpentry), Tennessee Quilts & February Hill Quilting Retreat, The Kitchen at Grace Meadows Farm, Architectural Restoration & Paint with Chris Basar, Speed Goat Solutions

For full contact information visit our website at www.heritageall.org/links.



Vol. Spotlight Cont.

Why do you think other folks should get involved with the Heritage Alliance in a volunteer capacity?

All I can say is that volunteering for the HA is an all around win-win situation. For me it is a positive, enjoyable, flexible and worthwhile use of my time and at the same time it serves our community and our people by supporting this unique, important and awesome organization and the people who work so hard to provide all they do for us.

To find out you can get involved with the Progressive Dinner, reach out to the Heritage Alliance. We have several volunteer opportunities available.

Article image of Patricia Stern and her granddaughters Caroline and Sophia at the 2019 Progressive Dinner.

History Happy Hour 2023 Schedule

4/20 Rene Rodgers, Birthplace of Country Music
I've Endured: Women in Old-time Music at Chester Inn
5/18 Dr. Timothy Holder
Adversity and Early Presidents at Chester Inn
6/15 Katherine Banks- Milligan University
Co-education at Milligan at Chester Inn
7/20 Dr. Bill Kennedy- Historic Zoning
Jonesborough's Historic Porches and Bay Windows: Form, Function, and Flowers at Visitors Center
8/17 Frank Collins
Historic Image Overlays – Google Earth Pro, DeedMapper, Plan of Jonesborough, Historic Land Records, and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps at Storytelling Center
9/21 Tema Nicole Stauffer
Southern Fiction at Storytelling Center
10/19 Jason McCusker
Historic Preservation at Storytelling Center
11/16 The Appalachian Project at Storytelling Center

*Speakers and Topics Subject to Change
*All programs are **Thursdays at 6:30 and free**

History of Local Horse Racing by Dr. Tewell

Although horseracing is typically affiliated with the state of Kentucky, thanks especially to the longstanding and much-celebrated Kentucky Derby, Tennessee has a surprising history with the sport, as well. In 1836, Mr. Lewis Sanders, a prominent breeder in Kentucky, noted that “the prevailing opinion in the South is that Tennessee possess more and better [horse] blood than Kentucky.” Former President and famous Tennessean Andrew Jackson, for instance, was a noted horseman well versed in breeding, racing, and

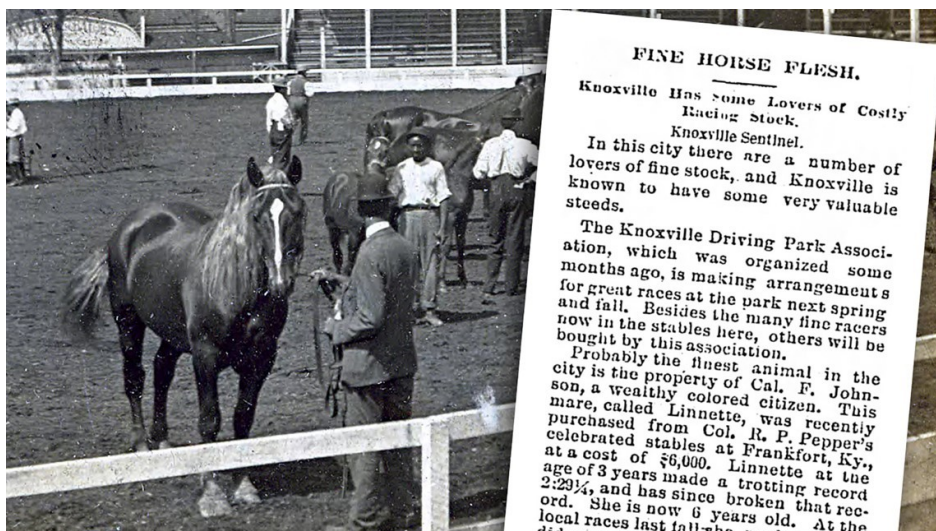
training. And Tennessee stock regularly raced at prominent tracks in Mobile, Alabama; Natchez, Mississippi; and New Orleans, Louisiana. The Peyton Stake, which took place on the Nashville course in the fall of 1843, was the richest stake to occur anywhere in the world up to that time, with the winner receiving \$35,000.

Pre-Civil War, racetracks and jockey clubs flourished, with men and women alike flocking to the grandstands. Unfortunately, this cultural pastime was destroyed by the

Civil War, as racing infrastructure deteriorated and records (stud books, jockey club records, industry journals, and pedigree papers) disappeared. Horses esteemed for their bloodlines, agility, and speed were co-opted into military service or taken as prizes. After the war, thoroughbred racing and yearling sales resumed in Nashville and at sites like the Belle Meade Plantation; however, as the 19th century progressed, California, Kentucky Maryland, New York, and Virginia emerged as preminent breeding



Horse Racing cont.



states. The “Golden Age” of Tennessee racing began to fade when the Nashville Race Track closed in 1886 due to poor conditions, including periodic flooding, marking the end of an era.

Reforms of the 1880s and the 1890s – including temperance, anti-gambling, and religious revivals – turned popular opinion against the long-established pastime. The financial crisis of 1893 compounded public opposition to a sport now deemed frivolous and morally “pernicious.” With increased competition thanks to the rise of prominent new tracks across the country, horseracing was steadily on the decline in Tennessee by the early 1890s. Some vestiges of the practice continued. For instance, Mr. L. Thomas, of the Arbor Vitae stock farm in Bristol, hosted public horse races in June 1894. One local newspaper reported at the time: “The prospects are that the races will be largely attended. Besides those who will go from Bristol and from all over Sullivan County, many lovers of sport are expected from Jonesboro and Johnson City. It will be a day

long to be remembered by all who are interested in horse races...” However, by the dawn of the 20th century, prior generations of horsemen were largely either retired or deceased, many of the major stud farms were shut down, and historic racetracks were abandoned.

The final death knell for the state’s horseracing industry sounded in the early years of the new century. In January 1905, the State Legislature passed the Rice-Ligon Bill, prohibiting betting on horseracing in the state of Tennessee. The bill made gambling on horse races illegal, making it a misdemeanor crime punishable by a \$25 fine. The Rice-Ligon Bill also repealed all laws that allowed and permitted betting at licensed racetracks across the state. Opponents bemoaned the legislation, which threatened to kill the state’s already diminished horseracing industry, including the fall and spring meets still taking place in Nashville and Memphis at the time.

The Rice-Ligon Bill effectively ended horse breeding and horse racing in the state. Although it was

ultimately unsuccessful, due to a technicality cited in court, a later version, known as the Foust Bill, was passed in February 1907. Critics, whose voices appeared in Johnson City’s *Comet*, condemned East Tennessee politicians who supported the bill while still engaging in gambling, such as poker, claiming that “everybody wants to reform everybody else and everything expect themselves.”

Some horseracing continued thanks to special exhibitions and fairs, including the Appalachian Exposition of 1910 in Knoxville, which set aside 6-days for horse racing. Several thousand dollars were expended on a new Grandstand, stables, and racetrack “making it one of the best and perhaps the fastest in the South,” according to Jonesborough’s *Herald and Tribune*.

That year, a concerted effort to legalize and re-establish horseracing in Tennessee gained momentum, proposing a state racing commission similar to neighboring Kentucky. In the end, though, the legislation failed to materialize and the prohibition remained intact. One authority lamented the loss; John Hervey, who authored *History of Racing in America*, described the demise of horse racing and breeding in Tennessee as “one of the major misfortunes of the breed and of the sport.” And thus, a storied part of the state’s history – and it’s prominent place in the ‘Sport of Kings’ – came to a close.

Photo Credit: 1890 Knoxville Sentinel article on “Fine Horse Flesh” claims the finest animal in the city belongs to Cal. F. Johnson. Courtesy of “Off to the Races: Cal Johnson’s Track from Slavery to Speedways by Jim Matheny



Board Member Spotlight: Walter Buford (2020-2023)

How long did you serve on the Heritage Alliance board?

I served three years. And I would say one of my favorite memories is when we had the Taste of Tennessee, and I was able to participate with deep-frying fish, and smoked burgers and such. It seemed like people were glad to get out for a change. I think Anne Mason does a great job coordinating business, and fun for the community.

Why did you decide to join the board?

I was asked to join the board, and in doing so, I wanted to aid in diversifying the thought processes of how inclusion of the African-American is needed not only in Jonesborough, but the whole area to give significance of how this country was founded, and brought forward to modern times. We have a long way to go, but with the cooperation of the community, and the guiding hand of our creator, we can galvanize this area to be a guiding light for others to see.

What do you like to do in your free time?

What I like to do in my free time is travel, and fish. Our country is so vast, and awesome that we could spend a lifetime just visiting the natural beauty of the mountains, the valleys, the canyons, the waterfalls, the plains, the exciting and charming cities, and the list goes on and on. Suffice it to say that enjoying what God has made is a life-long trip.

Why should people get involved with the Heritage Alliance?

People should get involved with Heritage Alliance to help extend a warm inviting hand to people from other places, and cultures to share what the experiences have been here in this community from the time of our beginnings as a nation to today as we build a "Beloved Community" as inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King. And the inspiration to make that happen is "LOVE." Will you help???



*Walter Buford serving up fried fish at the Taste of Tennessee festival last June.
Photo by Joe Spiker.*

Thank you to Walter Buford and Kati Jenkins for their service on the board. Welcome to new Trustee
Nick Andrews

Chester Inn Exhibit Update: "Displaced, Not Placeless"

Our new exhibit "Displaced, Not Placeless" is an attempt to explore and reconcile with the difficult history of Indian removal here in Eastern Tennessee. From the earliest European settlers to the first generation of U.S. citizens, a prejudice against indigenous peoples proliferated. Ignorance, greed, and the belief that God meant for them to inhabit every corner of the Americas, led to the eradication of thousands of tribes. By the 1830s, another aspect of colonialism came to the forefront of public discourse concerning the

"Vanishing Redman." The federal government subsequently adopted policies based on paternalism. Indigenous people had always been cast as lesser than their European and American counterparts. They needed guidance in order to integrate with the modern world. A culture war was waged against the Cherokee and numerous other tribes that had been marched along the "Trail of Tears."

From their new reservations in the west, thousands of Indigenous children were placed in Indian Boarding

Schools. Forbade from even speaking their native languages, children were assimilated into the Christian world and then sent back to their reservations to further convert their tribes. The reality of these boarding schools has come to light in recent years. The abuse, starvation, and neglect the children endured stands in stark contrast to the paternalistic nature the U.S. and Canadian governments professed. It is still not known how many children died in the boarding schools. In recent years, a push to investigate the true nature of the Indian Boarding Schools has



Exhibit Update Cont.

gained momentum, largely championed by the Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, the first Indigenous person to occupy the office.

Read the rest of Joshua Dacey's article about the "Displaced, Not Placeless" exhibit on our website blog at heritageall.org.



From the Director's Desk:

Executive Director Anne Mason here to say that this quarter I am turning my column over to outgoing Programming Coordinator Dr. Megan Cullen Tewell so she can say her goodbyes.

"Change can be energizing and exciting... but it can also be nerve-racking, daunting, and saddening. The unknown qualities of change make it one of life's most bittersweet experiences. It is rarely easy.

As some of you know, a big change is on the horizon for me personally, as I am leaving my position as Programming Coordinator at the Heritage Alliance after 3.5 wonderful years. Effective March 24, I'll be moving on to try something new, having accepted a position with the National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C. The experience has caused me to reflect on my time at the Heritage Alliance, and I'd like to share some things that I've learned.

I joined the organization in October 2019, mere months before an international pandemic hit that affected all of our lives. As I worked to learn more about the organization, as well as the details of local history, and embrace my new-found responsibilities, one thing became clear: the Heritage Alliance is a very special organization, in terms of its work with the community, and especially the people that contribute to its mission. In those first few months – and every moment since then – I have been awed by the resiliency, dedication, and commitment of a group of individuals whose shared characteristic is that they care. About history; about service; and about people. The Heritage Alliance is one of those rare places that balances its mission and its offerings with the welfare, wellbeing, and personhood of the people associated with it. It's a beautiful thing to see the HA community support, care for, and uplift one another; I've cherished the experience, and deeply enjoyed being a part of that camaraderie.

Over the last several years, I've also been incredibly proud of the educational and interpretive projects that we have put forth, including special

programs (like the Useable Past series and Taste of Tennessee), exhibits ("Force and Charm": Women's Suffrage in Washington County; "The Noblest Art": A Local History of the Circus; Eight Myths About Appalachia); a downtown walking tour sharing local Black history, and more. Simply put, the Heritage Alliance does good history, and that's needed in our world now more than ever.

As a team, we've demonstrated a commitment to high quality historical scholarship – including expanded interpretations, inclusive perspectives, and an emphasis on original research – that elevates local stories and makes history even more relevant to contemporary life. Anne G'Fellers Mason, our intrepid Executive Director, has always encouraged staff to explore and experiment with new things, the sign of a strong leader, and a good indicator for the future direction of the Heritage Alliance and its work.

Truthfully, I could fill an entire newsletter with thoughts and reflections about my time at the Heritage Alliance. But I'll end by simply saying this: I'll miss it. Even though change is coming (as it always does) I will forever appreciate and hold dear my time with this incredible organization, and the experiences that I have had with all of you. I also know that this valuable and important work will continue, and that makes change – as difficult as it is – a little easier to bear. Thank you... and take care."

We will miss Megan, but we wish her all the luck in the world. Stay tuned for an exciting, new chapter at the Heritage Alliance.





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

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Former Programming Coordinator:
Dr. Megan Cullen Tewell

Oak Hill School: Deanna Carey

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