



1780 Council Oak  
at Quaker Meadows

# MUSEUM MUSINGS

## History Museum of Burke County Newsletter Winter 2023

### History Museum to Celebrate 20 Years in 2023!

Coming soon—your invitation to celebrate the 20 year anniversary of the History Museum!

It all began at a breakfast meeting on February 12, 2003. Superior Court Judge Claude Sitton, who had just retired, had a vision that he discussed with retired WPCD Dean Larry Clark, to start a museum depicting Burke County life.

In the past 20 years, and as of December 31, 23,010 artifacts and photos have been donated to the History Museum of Burke County. There have been hundreds of donors, are now hundreds of members, and volunteer hours number in the ten thousands. Each contribution and gift of time is greatly appreciated.

Three fun facts about the Museum:

-the first financial donation to the Museum was made by retired attorney Steve Settlemyre, who paid the filing fee for the corporate charter.

-the first donor of items donated was Claude Sitton. He donated a Belgium flintlock rifle with a sawed-off barrel that he found in a barrel in a barn in 1945.

-the latest artifact donated is (drumroll please) from Claude Sitton! He donated the Sitton family child's potty chair, circa 1920, made of wood and painted pink with a decal on the back. As far as Claude can remember, it was used by him and probably most of his siblings.

We asked several of the volunteers who have been with the Museum for a long time about some of the artifacts they find most interesting. The answers were generally varied.

Volunteer Robert Paganuzzi named the Sally Michaels collection of pipes and molds as “most interesting”. Sally made and sold pipes to both Confederate and Union soldiers.

Curator Phyllis Wogan won't name one specific item; she sees special artifacts in every exhibit. Her favorite “Time Limited” exhibit is the Watergate exhibit.

Assistant Curator Wayne Hitt stated the most interesting item given to the Museum, in his opinion, is the Bechtler one dollar gold coin, which is located in the “Gem” room. Wayne went on to say that he is puzzled by a photo that has not been identified. It is a large Civil War era photo of a woman found on the back of a framed donation.

We asked which exhibit most visitors inquire about/want to hear the story and the “Frankie Silver” exhibit was the answer by everyone asked.

Phyllis and Wayne were asked what they consider the biggest challenge to the Museum in the future. Phyllis replied “what do to with the Annex”. Wayne replied “our aging volunteers and daily management; we need volunteers to help learn what we do”.

Everyone agrees the support of volunteers, donors, and donations are the reason for the fine Museum we have today. More to come on the Celebration soon!



### **Largest Family Includes Visit to the Museum in their Reunion**

On Friday, November 25 persons who attended the Largest Family Reunion came to visit. There were approximately 30 individuals. What a great idea for a family reunion!



Molly Hemstreet presented a report at the March 10 “Coffee at the Museum” on the entrepreneurial programs sponsored by the Industrial Commons. The organization, as described on its website, “founds and scales employee owned social enterprises and industrial cooperatives and supports frontline workers”.

*The History Museum of Burke County has IRS approval as a 501 (c) (3) public nonprofit educational organization. Financial information about the History Museum and a copy of its solicitation license are available from the NC Charitable Licensing Service at 1-888-830-4989. This license is not an endorsement by the State.*



**Troop 889 pictured with a flag retirement drop-off box.**

Pictured Left: Flag Retirement Boxes and several of the Troop 889 Scouts. They are (first names only due to their age): Ryan, Ashley, Ben, Erik, Grayden, Greg, Joseph, Kyler, Malcke, Mason M., Mason B., Zachary.

Troop 889 Leaders are: William Brooks, Miguel Johnson, Bryan Kennedy (Father), Jason Middlecamp, Paul Vanover, Geoff Waddell (Scoutmaster)

### **Eagle Scout Project at the History Museum**

Ryan Kennedy, a rising senior at the Model Secondary School for the Deaf in Washington, DC, presented his Eagle Scout project to the History Museum.

As Kennedy looked for an Eagle Scout project, he contacted several community leaders. A representative from the Daughters of the American Revolution suggested flag retirement boxes.

Kennedy, along with others in Troop 889, built and painted the boxes. One is at the History Museum and the other is located at Ace Hardware. They are free for anyone to deposit worn flags so they can be honored and retired responsibly.



### **New to the Frankie Silver Exhibit**

Curator Phyllis Wogan has searched high and low for a mannequin to depict Frankie Silver. She has found one that fits! Frankie is believed to have been a diminutive 4’8”, with long, light brown hair. In period dress, such as Frankie wore, the mannequin completes this popular exhibit.

The Railroad Depot is open on Saturdays, 1 PM—3 PM and by appointment. The Railroad Depot is located at 624 South Green Street in Morganton.

Admission is free; donations appreciated.

Call 828.437.1777 to schedule a visit!

“Like” the History Museum on Facebook and look for trivia questions related to Burke County History!



Ed Phillips, Executive Director of the Burke County Tourism Development Authority, caught up guests at the April 14 “Coffee at the Museum” with the latest in what Burke County offers that attracts daytime visitors and overnight guests from far and wide. Tourism is a significant driver for the Burke County economy.

Don Wright, retired from Wright Table Company, gave an information-packed program May 26 at the “Coffee at the Museum” about the Revolutionary War Navy.



Donna Teasley, Horticulture Agent with the Burke Cooperative Extension Office, gave a fascinating program during the June 23 “Coffee at the Museum”. “Fact, Fiction, or Grandma” was a talk about gardening. Of particular interest were the “Grandma” methods of planting and gardening.

So, if you see anyone taking a black snake and hitting an apple tree, that person was probably in the audience!

Email the History Museum at [burkehistory@gmail.com](mailto:burkehistory@gmail.com)



Kevin Baxter, Vice Chancellor of NCSSM, gave an update on the school at the August 25 “Coffee at the Museum”. He discussed the opening, and the plans for the new year. Fall semester kicked off with the School’s first students, some 150 juniors.

Thank you to each volunteer who assisted with the October 7 yard sale, held in the Museum Annex. Thank you to everyone who donated items! It was a success, raising \$1,432.78. Items not sold were given to the Habitat for Humanity Restore.

Amy Jackson-Kincaid, Program Supervisor of the Guardian Ad Litem program for the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts-10th Judicial District, spoke at the December 8 “Coffee at the Museum”. She discussed the importance of this program to youth in our County, and how it impacts their lives.



Newly-appointed Morganton Chief of Public Safety Jason Whisnant spoke during the November “Coffee at the Museum”. He discussed issues related to Morganton, such as the homeless population.

### **STAY TUNED!**

#### **COMING LATER IN 2023:**

Legacy of Work Exhibit and Monument on the grounds of the History Museum to honor textile, hosiery and furniture workers in Burke County.

The History Museum  
of Burke County, Inc.  
P.O. Box 416  
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201 West Meeting Street,  
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***Form for Membership, Donation, Brick Orders***

Your Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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**Membership** (Check appropriate category level)

Youth (to 18) - \$5

Conservator-\$500-\$999

Family-\$50

Benefactor-\$1,000 and above

Individual -\$35

Corporate Patron- \$250-\$499

Contributor-\$75

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Patron-\$100-\$499

Corporate Benefactor-\$1,000 & +

**General Donation \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pathway to History Brick Order (\$100 per Brick)**

Memorial

Honorarium

(Up to 3 lines, 15 characters per line, spaces count as ½ character)

**Line 1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Line 2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Line 3** \_\_\_\_\_