



MUSEUM MUSINGS

1780 Council Oak
at Quaker Meadows

History Museum of Burke County Newsletter Winter 2024

Here We Grow Again!

Museum member and supporter Jimmy Warlick has announced a matching capital campaign with the History Museum to revive and repair the Museum Annex. The Annex, which will be named the “Sitton Education Center,” will be focused on teaching local history, with new exhibits, exhibition partnerships, and especially education programs designed for Burke County’s public, private, and home-schooled elementary age students.

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Museum Executive Director Claude Sitton and Museum Member Jimmy Warlick are pictured above. Jimmy is presenting a check for \$125,000 towards the Challenge!



History at Your Fingertips!

Developed by Veer Goparaju and Pranav Agrawai, pictured left, The History Museum has an App! Veer and Pranav, who are seniors at the North Carolina School of Science and Math, introduced the App at a Launch Party on November 28. They were aided by History Museum Curator Phyllis Wogan and History Museum Board Member Louis Asbury.

Board Member Robert Patton introduced Veer and Pranav, who gave an overview of how they brought the idea of the App to the Museum. They showed the App and its many features to those present.

The App will provide an exciting look at the Museum and the Depot, featuring many of the exhibits. It includes access to veteran videos,

information on the mill children and the Workers Legacy monument.

At this time, the App is available on the iPhone or iPad. The goal is to soon expand access on other media.

These gifted students have pledged to continue their work with the App and provide periodic updates. Their talent, expertise and innovation are much appreciated!

The History Museum App is pictured above. To download it:

Go to the App Store

In the Search box, type “History Museum of Burke County”. Download, open and enjoy the tour!

NCSSM Mentees Develop Enhanced Visitor Activities

The History Museum is very thankful for NCSSM Mentees Aditi Kandukuri and Bryan Huang, who have developed a students' scavenger hunt and Junior Explorer survey. The activities are designed to enhance tours for young people (or the young at heart).

This project was sanctioned by the school and part of their mentorship program which they are doing for credit.

Curator Phyllis Wogan, who works with the mentees, expresses how talented they both are! She notes their contributions are very beneficial to the Museum and visitors!

Cannon Foundation Grant Received!



Margaret Patton Hampson, Museum Docent & Grant Writer (pictured left), obtained a \$25,000 grant for the History Museum from The Cannon Foundation. The funds will be used towards the Sitton Education Center renovation.

The Cannon Foundation was established in 1943 by Charles A. Cannon, President and CEO of Cannon Mills Company. The Foundation exists to fund projects for North Carolina nonprofits that have been in existence five years or more. They provide grants relating to four areas: human services, higher education, healthcare and community. The History Museum grant falls under the “community” area. Community grants are made for capital or equipment projects for organizations serving veterans, promoting the arts and providing historic or environmental preservation services in North Carolina.

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

Don't Miss the Morganton Railroad Depot

The Railroad Depot is open on Saturdays, 1:00 PM—3:00 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!

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.

History Museum Wins Awards

The History Museum, Executive Director Claude Sitton, and Museum Musings recently won awards from the North Carolina Society of Historians!

The History Museum won the “Museum Award of Excellence,” Executive Director Claude Sitton received the “Historian of the Year 2023” award, and Museum Musings won the “Journalism Award of Excellence.”

The Museum Award of Excellence recognizes the History Museum for twenty years of outstanding exhibits, meticulous records of an ever-expanding collection of artifacts, docent recruitment and training, community involvement, and volunteers.

Retired Judge Sitton was honored for founding the History Museum, for his vision and dedication, leadership, and a lengthy list of his work with the History Museum.

“Museum Musings” was recognized for its “invaluable contributions toward the preservation and perpetuation of the history of North Carolina.”

We give a huge “thank you” to each of our volunteers, members, donors, and visitors for helping in our success - without you, the History Museum would not be possible!

“Here We Grow Again” continued from page 1

Once upgrades are complete, the space can be used for public, private and community events that reflect the history of our county and diverse local communities.

Warlick has pledged a \$500,000 matching grant, over a period of five years, for developing an education program and for an education director. The Museum’s match will be used for the building upgrades.

A successful campaign requires individual, corporate and foundation contributions. Donations or pledges are needed! Pledges may be made over five years. Memorials or gifts in honor may be given. Representatives from the History Museum will be glad to answer any questions, schedule a visit or provide a brochure, or program for a group. Just call 828.437.1777.

Upcoming “Coffee at the Museum”

Thursday, February 22 – David Dowdy, Author of “Zebulon’s Oath”

Thursday, March 28 – Robert Patton IV, “Revolutionary War Guns” (exhibit of items)

January “Coffee at the Museum”



On January 25, the editorial staff of "The Paper" presented the history of the founding of Burke County's only "all local news" newspaper a year ago and reviewed its successes in the past 52 weeks of publication. Publisher Allen Van Noppen described the search for information about what makes local newspapers survive in a time when digital information seems to be overtaking print information. He outlined the steps "The Paper" has taken to be open to the public, inclusive in news coverage, and intentional in representing Burke County. He noted that the office, on Sterling Street, is open all day Monday through Friday. A person answers the phone. Editor Bill Poteat announced that, as of May 1, he will become a part-time employee and take the title "Editor Emeritus" when Angela Copeland becomes "Editor." "The Paper" team is pictured left.



Professor, historian, and author Richard Eller was the “Coffee at the Museum” speaker in June. He spoke about his latest work, which documents the rise, fall and resurrection of the furniture industry in the western foothills. Eller was named 2021 Historian of the Year by the North Carolina Society of Historians. He heads up the only publishing initiative by a community college in North Carolina, Redhawk Publications at Catawba Valley Community College in Hickory, North Carolina..

Author Sherrie Sigmon was the July speaker at the “Coffee at the Museum.” She gave a fascinating presentation about the Town of Rhodhiss and her book “Weaving the Heart Threads of a Mill Village: Rhodhiss, North Carolina.” She spent nearly 40 years researching the town’s history and published the book in 2023. She was accompanied by Town Manager Rick Justice. The 120th Anniversary festival was also discussed.



Sherrie is pictured above, with Rick, Rhodhiss Town Clerk Barbara Harmon, and the Rhodhiss flag.

Cousins Mary Lou Avery Furr and Joseph Waightstill Avery, Jr., spoke at the October 5th “Coffee at the Museum”. They talked about their ancestor, Waightstill Avery, who was a prominent figure in North Carolina and Burke County history. He served as North Carolina’s first attorney general before joining in the fight for America’s independence from Great Britain, attaining the rank of colonel. Following the war, he served in the North Carolina General Assembly. Avery’s biography notes that Avery County is named for him.



Rick Furse, Dean of Workforce Development at Western Piedmont Community College, highlighted the school's programs in the trades during his August 10 presentation at the "Coffee at the Museum." The new trades program is providing job training for youth ages 16-24. The job market is very strong for the skilled trades of carpenters, plumbers, electricians and heating and air technicians. The new technology building at WPCC was built and designed specifically to meet this need. Contact WPCC at 828.448.3500 for more information on the trades programs or any other program.



Linville Falls history was the topic of the October 26 "Coffee at the Museum." Tense Franklin Banks, an award-winning author and historian, shared colorful personal stories of Linville Falls, where she was born and raised, and her family's connection to the area. Her grandmother told her stories about the Wiseman family, and her father told stories about the Franklin family. Both families were early pioneers in the mountains of the area. Her book "Linville Falls: A Village, A People, A Wilderness," won the North Carolina Society of Historians Award for Excellence.

The book may be purchased in the History Museum Gift Shop.

Patricia Cooper Baker was the featured speaker for the November 17 "Coffee at the Museum." She talked about how her Burke County ancestors, dating back to the Revolutionary War era, inspired her to write. She writes historical fiction, mostly for young readers. Patricia's latest novel, "The Heart of Blackbeard," recently received a Book of Excellence Award from the North Carolina Society of Historians. Her books may be purchased in the Museum Gift Shop.



The Thursday, December 14th "Coffee at the Museum" featured William Brown III. He talked about local patriot Dr. Joseph Dobson, Sr., (1720-1791), who was his fifth great-grandfather. Dr. Dobson, who was an early settler in Burke County, was a medical doctor who treated wounded soldiers during the Revolutionary War.

Dr. Dobson was the first college-educated physician in western North Carolina, the first Clerk of Superior Court for the Morgan District.

William is pictured left, wearing the type of clothing Dr. Dobson would have worn.

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Pathway to History Brick OR Dignity of Work Walkway (\$125 per Brick)

Choose one: Pathway to History Dignity of Work Walkway

Memorial Honorarium

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

Line 1 _____

Line 2 _____

Line 3 _____