

Murfreesboro, NC

King's Landing

October 2025

President's Message



Greetings,

Murfreesboro is enjoying wonderful autumn days of dappled sunlight, blue skies, and crisp temperatures as we look back over the year. February was the high point of course with the celebration of the bicentennial of Lafayette's visit to our town in 1825. In partnership with the Historic

Murfreesboro Commission and the American Friends of Lafayette, MHA staged a re-enactment of the historic event at the Town Hall on Broad Street on February 26th. This was followed by a gala reception at Hertford Academy. Many thanks to all of the volunteers who made our celebration an unqualified success. Just as Murfreesboro was the first town in North Carolina to welcome the Hero of Two Worlds 250 years ago, we once again kicked off the Bicentennial celebrations across the state. We can all be pleased that we did North Carolina proud. The president of the American Friends of Lafayette declared that his reception in the Boro was "The epitome of Southern hospitality."

The spring season kicked off with our first ever Kentucky Derby Party held on the grounds of the Walter Reed House. This event replaced the Garden Party at the Wheeler House from previous years. It was a festive Saturday afternoon marked by big hats and mint juleps. The weather was perfect as we welcomed new faces to this affair. Many thanks to various vendors who supplied food and drink. As John Wheeler Moore would have said "It was a grand affair in the estimation of the participants." At the end of the afternoon, everyone watched the Derby on a big screen TV. Party goers left abuzz. Plans are already well in hand for next year's Derby Party. I am delighted to report that we took in over \$4,000 in one afternoon.

On May 31 office manager Danny Figler and I represented MHA at the annual Porkfest, which was put on by the Murfreesboro Volunteer Fire Department. We sold our publications and raffled off a rare bottle of Elijah Craig Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey. Danny and I had fun giving out information on MHA's work. We even signed up a new member.

Summer came to a climax with the North Carolina Watermelon Festival on July 30 through August 2.

Once again MHA staffed the Hot Fudge Cake Booth at the festival. Many thanks to our faithful volunteers who made our participation in this event a grand success. We sold over 230 fudge cakes, 373 bottles of water and 625 cans of soda. We made a net profit of \$3,664, an increase of more than \$1,200 over last year. Murfreesboro citizens could see that their Historical Association is a vibrant organization deeply involved in the community. We were blessed with good weather this year. We had no rain while temperatures were much lower than in 2024.

We are now looking forward to our 39th annual Candlelight Christmas Tour on December 5th and 6th. We have moved the date forward by one week. This means we will no longer be in competition with the Edenton Tour. The event was featured in a full-page ad in Our State magazine due out in November. Thanks to the North Carolina Community Development Initiative for this support. Candlelight tickets are available at our office at the Roberts-Vaughan House or online at <https://www.murfreesboronc.org>.

Mark your calendars for February 7, 2026. Thanks to the efforts of Al Parker, the state of North Carolina will be erecting one of their historical markers in honor of Hannah Crafts on east Main Street. Her book "The Bondwoman's Narrative" is considered the first novel written by an African American woman. We will dedicate the marker on that date. Immediately afterwards the Herford County African American History Coalition will dedicate a marker in honor of George Reynolds, the first Black postmaster of Murfreesboro at his home on east Broad Street. A reception will follow at the Murfree Center. The event honoring Hannah Crafts is generating a great deal of interest. We are expecting some high-profile visitors. Stay tuned.

As always, I could not do what I do without the capable support of our office manager Danny Figler. I want to thank our excellent executive committee, especially Lloyd Hill and Lamar Van Brackle, who look after our fourteen historic properties. Finally, I salute our many local volunteers and friends across the country. For their unwavering support, I am profoundly thankful.

Jimmy Moore

Board of Directors Executive Committee

Jimmy Moore, President
Armando Torres, Vice-President
Sara Frances Hill, Secretary
Paige Sumner, Treasurer

<u>Term Ends 2026</u>	<u>Term Ends 2027</u>	<u>Term Ends 2028</u>
Charlie Cole	Hunter Brown	Kelsey Rose
Mary Hellmann	Donna Robbins	Michael Zhe
Debbie Hill	Mike Saner	Mark Gaskins
Stanley J. Parker, Jr.	Lisa Turner	Elicia Revelle
Holt Rose	Ken Wolfskill	Will Cowan

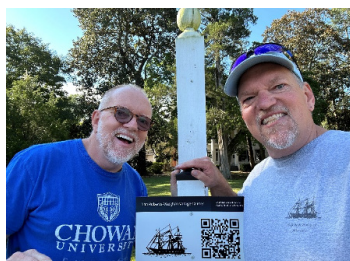
Site Managers

Milton Vaughan and Hazel Davis	Agriculture/Transportation
Dennis Pauly	Evans Tin Shop
Mary Etta Flowers	Hertford Academy
Colon Balance	Jefcoat Museum
Katherine Zhe	Murfree-Smith Law Office
Steve Fowler	William Rea Museum
Dell Aycock	Dr. Walter Reed House
Bardin Torres	Roberts-Vaughan House
Steve Sumner	Southall Cemetery
Michelle Surerus	Village Print Shop
Mitch Henke	Vincent-Deale Blacksmith
Craig Dennis	John Wheeler House
Hal Thomas	B.B. Winborne Country Store & Law Office
Mark & Al Parker	Camp Garden

Katherine Zhe is the new site manager for the Murfree-Smith Law Office, and **Mark and Al Parker** are our new site managers for Camp Garden. We have never had managers for the garden, but we do now. Mark & Al came back last month with other volunteers and cleaned up this area along with other historic sites in preparation for Ghost Tours and upcoming events. We are so grateful for having active volunteers in our association. When you see them, say congratulations!



Katherine Zhe



Al & Mark Parker

Publications Report

You might find your next great read or perfect gift from this list of publications available for purchase at the MHA office or online at <https://murfreesboronc.org/shop/ols/categories/books>

F. ROY JOHNSON

<i>Legends & Myths of North Carolina's Roanoke-Chowan Area</i>	15.00
<i>The Peanut Story</i>	15.00
<i>The Fabled Doctor Jim Jordan</i>	15.00
<i>Vol. 1 – The Tuscaroras Mythology: Medicine, Culture</i>	15.00
<i>Vol. 2 – The Tuscaroras History, Tradition, Culture</i>	15.00
<i>The Algonquians – Vol. 1 & 2 (Combined in 1 Book)</i>	20.00

THOMAS C. PARRAMORE

<i>The Ancient Maritime Village of Murfreesborough 1787-1825</i>	15.00
<i>Murfreesboro, NC & the Rise of Higher Education for Women</i>	15.00
<i>Murfreesboro & the Founding of the American Republic</i>	15.00
<i>Murfreesboro, NC and the Great Intracoastal Waterway</i>	15.00
<i>Murfreesboro, NC: Cradle of Titans</i>	15.00
<i>Murfreesboro, NC and the Roots of Nat Turner Revolt</i>	15.00
<i>The Gatling Aeroplane of 1873: America's First Airplane</i>	7.00
<i>Trail Separation: Murfreesboro, NC and the Civil War</i>	15.00
<i>The Riddle of the First American Novel</i>	15.00
<i>William Hill Brown: The Power of Sympathy</i>	18.00

ALICE ELEY JONES

<i>A Maritime History</i>	20.00
<i>The Builders & Architecture of Historic Murfreesboro</i>	20.00
<i>Woodworking Tools of Historic Murfreesboro</i>	20.00
<i>Selena Stays Home</i>	10.00
<i>Black America Series – Hertford County, NC</i>	25.00

FRANK H. HARRIS, JR.

<i>A History of the Riddick Plantation of Hertford County, NC</i>	20.00
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WARREN MILTEER, JR.

<i>Hertford County, NC Free People of Color and Their Descendants</i>	22.00
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MURFREESBORO HISTORIC COMMISSION

<i>West of the Chowan – The Historic Architecture of Hertford County, NC</i>	45.00
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MURFREESBORO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

<i>Walking Tour Booklet</i>	8.00
<i>Renaissance in Carolina 1971-1976</i>	5.00
<i>Renaissance in Carolina – Vol. 2</i>	15.00

SONJA MCGIBONEY

<i>Jazzy Explores Murfreesboro, North Carolina</i>	15.00
<i>Jazzy Coloring Book</i>	FREE

HENRY KING BURGWIN, V

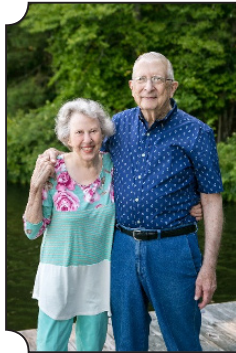
<i>Henry K. Burgwyn and Life on the Roanoke River 1840 - 1860</i>	20.00
<i>Albemarle Memories: A Pictorial History of the mid-1800's - 1939</i>	40.00
<i>Hecimovich, Gregg: The Life and Times of Hannah Crafts</i>	25.00
<i>Crafts, Hannah: A Bondswoman's Narrative</i>	18.00
<i>Lafayette Bicentennial Tour 2024 - 2025 Calendar</i>	20.00
<i>Frank & Gloria Womble: Celebrate Lafayette</i>	5.00
<i>Roberts-Vaughan House Christmas Ornament</i>	5.00
<i>Postcards (set of 10)</i>	10.00

Obituaries

by Jimmy Moore

The Rev. Thomas Herbert Caulkins, pastor emeritus of Murfreesboro Baptist Church, died on May 16, 2025, at the age of 96. Born in Factoryville, PA on June 27, 1928, he was one of four sons of the Rev. Charles Whitney Caulkins and his wife Eunice Field Caulkins. He graduated from the University of Richmond in 1949. Next he received the Master of Social Work from Richmond Professional Institute in 1951. We was awarded the Bachelor of Divinity from Crozier Theological Seminary in 1954. During his long clerical career, Mr. Caulkins was the pastor of churches in Branchville, VA, Clover, VA and Goldsboro, NC. In 1968 he answered the call to become the pastor of Murfreesboro Baptist Church. He served there until his retirement in 1993 becoming a beloved leader of his congregation and of the community. Mr. Caulkins also served as adjunct professor of religion at Chowan University in the 1970s. During retirement, he was the interim pastor of eleven churches in northeastern North Carolina and southern Virginia. Mr. Caulkins and his wife Ann were faithful members of the Murfreesboro Historical Association. In later years, they delighted in welcoming visitors to the annual Candlelight Christmas Tour. Pastor Caulkins and his wife Ann Baird Caulkins are survived by their two daughters Charlene Eason and Bonnie Revelle. All are residents of Murfreesboro. On June 1, the Rev. Dennis Bazemore, pastor of Ahoskie First Baptist Church, conducted a memorial service for Mr. Caulkins at Murfreesboro Baptist Church. In his eulogy, Mr. Bazemore, who was mentored by Mr. Caulkins, spoke movingly of his lasting contributions to his church and the community. Memorial contributions may be made to Murfreesboro Baptist Church or to the Caulkins Scholarship at Chowan University.

We are also saddened to hear that Rev. Caulkins wife of 76 years **Ann Baird Caulkins**, age 95 recently passed. She died on October 13, 2025, at her home in Murfreesboro. She was born on December 31, 1929, in McKinney, Virginia. Ann served faithfully alongside Tom as the minister's wife. She became wholly invested in serving their congregations with love, hospitality, and graciousness. She also worked as a social worker at Roanoke-Chowan Human Services Center for over twenty years, bringing that same love and compassion to the clients she helped. They will be missed.



Harris Finch Foundation Grant 2025

The Murfreesboro Historical Association has received a grant of \$10,000 from the Harris Finch Corporation of New York City! This unrestricted gift was made to support MHA's ongoing work. We are deeply grateful for this significant gift from the foundation. This donation is made in honor of Dr. Roderick H. Gary and his family of Murfreesboro. Courtney Finch Taylor wrote "Dr. Gary was my great-grandfather. My mother Anna Virginia Harris Finch, and her sister Cora Louise Harris, both Dr. Gary's granddaughters, spoke often and fondly of their childhood stays with family in Murfreesboro, and they continued to visit the town throughout their lives." We hope that Ms. Taylor and her family pay us a visit so they can see the work here that they are supporting. This story is one of many families who left here generations ago and continue to feel a connection with Murfreesboro. Dr. Roderick Henry Gary was born in Garysburg on December 10, 1856, and died in Winton, October 24, 1929. He was buried in Riverside Cemetery. In 1967 Dr. Gary's Greek Revival home was moved from Sycamore Street to its present location on North Wynn Street. Restoration started under John and Rachel Parker and was continued by successive owners.

Today this handsome residence is the home of Zack and Amanda Taylor.



408 N. Wynn Street,
Murfreesboro, NC

PROPERTIES UPDATE

by Lamar Van Brackle



Greetings Sports Fans! Welcome to another scintillating and perhaps informative Properties Report. With an appropriate fanfare from the trumpets- here we go!

Properties

B.B. Winborne Country Store & Law Office c. 1872

- Ongoing gas leak between the underground gas tank and the gas pack has been solved. Continuous efforts have isolated the problems to the tank outlet valve which has been replaced. Approximately 50 gallons of gas remains in the tank which will more than support upcoming cold weather events. We plan to replace the tank when it is empty.
- Repairs to the Law Office safe enclosure have been completed with new support columns installed.

John Wheeler House c. 1810

- The damage to the picket fence along Fourth Street has been repaired and repainted.
- There is a water leak at the meter in front of the house. We are awaiting determination by the Town as to responsibility for repair.

Hertford Academy c.1811

- The upstairs heat pump was repaired during this period.
- A broken concrete shingle resulted in water damage to the upstairs hall ceiling. After the shingle was repaired, the damaged plaster was replaced and repainted.
- The one-story storage/utility room attached to the west side of the main house is leaking. The concrete shingles are in poor condition and will be replaced by wooden shakes. It is also anticipated that the roof structure under the shingles will require repair. This will be accomplished in the near future.

Summer Wind Damage

There were significant damaging wind events this summer with widespread damage throughout. Two trees were down at John Wheeler House resulting in damage to the picket fence. The Walter Reed property lost a large pecan tree along with major damage to a magnolia. A large tree was also toppled at the non-historical "Headquarters" Building a.k.a. the former Community Service building. One of the large oak trees behind Hertford Academy also suffered significant damage along with two of the crepe myrtles along William Street near the William Rea Museum. Less serious damage with downed limbs and foliage requiring clean-up was widespread.

As expected, clean up required expensive outside assistance. Fortunately, Wayne Brown stepped up, as he frequently does, and removed two of the three large, downed trees and cleaned up the major damage to two other large trees. Mike Saner cleaned up downed limbs and debris along Williams Street adjacent to the Agriculture/Transportation Building. This exceptional assistance and support was most appreciated and resulted in major financial savings.

Grounds Maintenance

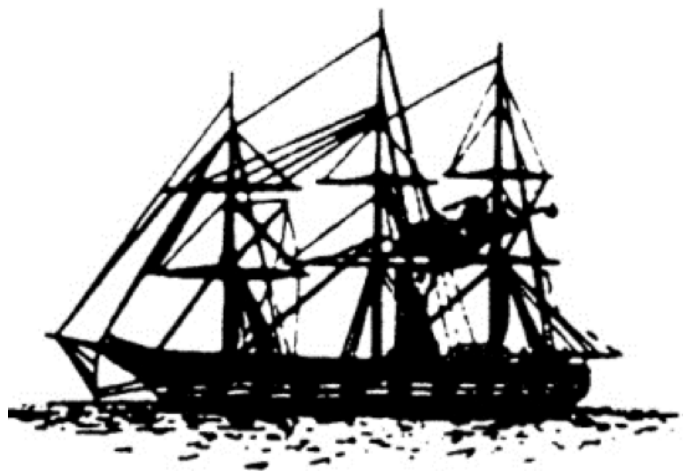
September was pruning and clean up month in the heart of the Historical District. The John Wheeler Garden and the Camp Garden received much needed clean up and pruning along with trees at the Vincent-Deale Blacksmith Shop, and the Evans Tin Shop. Volunteers that made this happen include Al Parker, Mark Parker, Craig Dennis, Lisa Turner, and Paige and Steve Sumner. A hearty thanks to all involved.

The campaign targeting our fire ants is aggressively continuing with some success. However, fire ants may not be all bad. The annual Fire Ant Festival returns to Ashburn, Georgia, 27-29 March 2026 featuring such events as Fire Ants Got Talent show, Kids Find the Fire Ants Hunt, and the ever-popular Fire Ant Calling contest. It seems someone locally knows to call fire ants. Perhaps a road trip is in order.

Closing Comments

Lloyd Hill, our indefatigable Property Czar, continues to set new standards for superior service. Regretfully, the anticipated and well-deserved recognition by the Kingdom of Laputa appears to be held up by bureaucratic skullduggery. Perhaps it is time to impose major tariffs on Laputa in order to get their attention and ensure Lloyd receives his gold embossed, suitable for framing, certificate. In the meantime, HEARTY WELL DONE!

Cheers and Go Team(s)!



Historical Properties Available for Special Occasions

Looking for an event venue? Four of our historic buildings and grounds are available to rent for your next special occasion: weddings, engagement parties, bridal showers, baby showers, class reunions, etc.

The Hertford Academy building and grounds, Roberts-Vaughan House building, and grounds (there is a great gazebo in back of the house), and John Wheeler House porch, kitchen, bathroom, and grounds. Each of these property rents for \$250 per day plus a \$125 refundable deposit, and the Dr. Walter Reed House Annex rents for \$150 per day plus a \$100 refundable deposit.



Roberts-Vaughn House



John Wheeler House



Hertford Academy

Contact the MHA office to reserve a date for your next special occasion, 252-398-5922

New Historic Murfreesboro Online Tour

by Al Parker

The Murfreesboro Historical Association has a new way to share the history of our town and properties to attract visitors. Our website now features a self-guided online tour that can be taken at any time. Visit <https://murfreesboronc.org/mha-tour-index> to see it. There are 30 locations on the tour starting at Murfree's Landing and ending at the David Alexander Barnes house on West Main Street. Along the tour route, 13 of our MHA properties have new signs with QR codes that can be scanned with the camera on your smartphone. Scanning the QR code will bring up a web page from the tour with the history of that location.

Al Parker wrote the tour, and the website design and signs were created by Mark Parker. Al and Mark installed the signs in September.

The tour features the history and lore of the location along with many historical and contemporary photographs. Videos will be added to some of the tour location pages in the new future. Please check it out for yourself and share it with your friends and family. You may take the tour in person visiting each location, or you may take it virtually from anywhere you have internet access.



murfreesboronc.org/mha-tour-index



Signpost at John Wheeler House



Mark Parker installing post



Al Parker digging a post hole

Social Media and Its Importance to Murfreesboro

by Al Parker

You can help the Murfreesboro Historical Association build an audience on social media. Our Facebook posts give us the opportunity to share bits of our history but more importantly they build an audience where we can advertise our events. You help us build that audience when you click on **FOLLOW, SHARE, LIKE**, and **COMMENT**. Open our Facebook page located at <https://www.facebook.com/MurfreesboroHAORG>. Click “Follow” on our page.

Read our posts and then click on **Like** and then **Share** the ones that you enjoy, especially the ones about our events like our annual meeting, Kentucky Derby Party, Ghost Tour, Soup & Sandwich Lunch, Candlelight Christmas, etc. If it an event that you enjoyed in the past or something that you are looking forward to, let everyone know by making a **Comment** about it. Your comments encourage others to come to our events.

How important is our social media? In the past year, we had **335,727** views on Facebook. That is the number of times our posts were seen. We have more than 1,453 people who follow us on Facebook (the number of people who have clicked Like on our Facebook page), up 12.5% from the previous year. **These are impressive numbers.** We also partnered with other groups on Facebook to help promote our content. Al Parker connected MHA with “The Lantern,” a page that shares ghost stories from North and South Carolina. A post created by Al for “The Lantern” which also promoted our Ghost Tour had over 50,000 hits.

Mark Parker designed and maintains our website. In the past twelve months, the website has had **17,909** visits with **115** orders of books and event tickets.

Open our Facebook page located at <https://www.facebook.com/MurfreesboroHAORG>. Click “Like” on our page.



The Murfreesboro Historical Association, Inc.

1K likes • 1.3K followers



Like

Message

Search



The Murfreesboro Historical Association, Inc.

1.4K followers • 152 following

Follow

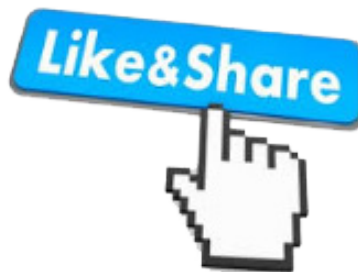
Search



Scan me for details!

October 18th, 2025. (Rain Date, October 25th, 2025)

Tickets are on sale now at www.murfreesboronc.org



Don't forget to 'CLICK'

URGENT

MHA is in need for members to update their email addresses.

The main communication we have with our members is through emails to reach as many as we can to inform you about upcoming events, things of interest, and fundraising information. Please call or send an email to murfreesborohistorical@gmail.com informing us of your current email you use, along with the phone number to reach you and we will update your record for you. Your cooperation is always appreciated.

Kentucky Derby Party May 2025

by Donna Robbins

The word is fabulous. That is the feedback we are getting for the first annual Kentucky Derby Party. On Saturday, May 3, 2025, one hundred plus attendees enjoyed a beautiful day of fun, food, music, and prizes. Also fabulous were the outfits and hats worn by attendees. Check out the pictures on the MHA Facebook page!

Jay Jenkins, our distinguished emcee, announced our events, entertained us with great music, and kept things going with excitement and humor.

Food by Mary Etta Flowers team was, as always, wonderful. Flowers by Dell Aycock and Bardin Torres, along with hanging basket from C&K Auto (NAPA) of Murfreesboro and blooming bulbs from Ace Hardware of Murfreesboro added just the right touch of spring.

Big shout out to Fybe for making sure our internet connection was ready for viewing the race! They worked hard and quickly to get us online!

Garrett-Sykes Funeral Home provided a tent for covering our technology and viewing the race, along with their sponsorship of the Hobby Horse Race, ticket purchases, and monetary donation! Thank you Garrett-Sykes!

Other Hobby Horse Race sponsors were:

Jay Jenkins, Shaggin' on the Beach, Earl 98.3

St. John's Karts

Southern Bank of Murfreesboro

Edward Jones of Murfreesboro

Benchmark Buildings & Irrigation, Inc.

Calvin Lassiter, Farm Bureau Insurance,
winner of the race!

Esther Cowan

John's Seafood

Mayor, Hal Thomas

Dixon's Quality Cleaners

Big rental tent and high-top tables from the **Party Guyz, LLC in Roanoke Rapids** was seamless and they did a great job, were very responsive, and had great prices.

Thanks to Chowan University Athletics for painting the grid for our Hobby Horse Race. Lisa Bland took some of her precious hours off to do this for us!

JT Taylor of John's Seafood provided wings and cash bar for beer. **Joni Saner** of Insert Coin Bar and Arcade provided the backdrop for pictures and cash bar for liquor. Both were very busy!

Lamar Van Brackle hosted the Silent Auction and was very successful.

Overall, gross proceeds were **\$3,785.00** while net was **\$3,000!** We are very pleased with the results and are excitedly looking forward to next year! This event involved volunteers from the community, and we are so grateful that everyone pitched in to help make this party such a success! Look at all the happy faces! All the volunteers are to be commended on doing a great job! Next year's Kentucky Derby Party will be coordinated by our Vice President Armando Torres.



Special Mention

In our May 2025 King's Landing – 38th Annual Candlelight Christmas the following information was omitted from the newsletter. We would like to apologize for this omission

2024 Candlelight Christmas Sponsors

Co-Sponsor Tour ~ \$1,000+ Mary Beth Parker

New Head of Historic Murfreesboro Commission

At its spring meeting on April 18, the Historic Murfreesboro Commission elected Debbie Hill as the new chairperson of the organization. Vice chair Carole Farnham will assist her. A former president of MHA, Debbie lives in Murfreesboro, where she is active in the Baptist Church and the Woman's Club. The Governor of North Carolina appoints members of the Commission

to work with MHA and to assist generally with historic preservation in the area. Mrs. Hill replaces John B. Parker of Roanoke Rapids, who served as chairperson for seventeen years. An ardent preservationist, he and his wife Rachel began the restoration of the Dr. Gary House in 1967. In more recent years, he restored the historic Francis Parker House on Highway 158 between Murfreesboro and Conway. Parker was the driving force behind the publication of "West of the Chowan: The Historic Architecture of Hertford County, North Carolina" in 2016.

"West of the Chowan" is available for purchase from MHA on our website or in the office. The leadership of the Murfreesboro Historical Association looks forward to continuing a good working relationship with the Commission. When you see Debbie please congratulate her.



Hot Fudge Cake Booth Fundraiser

by Danny Figler

The MHA Hot Fudge Cake Booth fundraiser at the 2025 North Carolina Watermelon Festival – (July 31st to August 2nd) was a success again this year raising over \$3,664 for the association.

Support was provided by many members in the form of donations of supplies used in the booth including soft drinks, bottled water, brownies, fudge sauce, and whipped cream. Additionally, financial donations earmarked for the booth were received. During the four-day event, we had over twenty-eight volunteers that worked shifts in the booth braving the August heat and humidity as they assembled and sold hot fudge cakes and cold drinks.

The key to the success of any fundraiser is the donors and volunteers. While space prevents a full list of all those directly involved, a special thank you to Mary Etta Flowers

for making all the cakes and fudge sauce, Mike Saner for graciously donating whipped cream, Danny Figler for donating the ice cream and Lloyd Hill for ensuring we had coolers full of fresh ice every day. A special thank you to Mike Saner for donating a brand-new freezer for use in the Hertford Academy. A well needed appliance.

This year we sold 373 bottles of water, 625 cans of soda, and 234 Fudge Cakes!

Also, this year the Murfreesboro Chamber of Commerce offered a \$5.00 discount for a hot fudge cake dessert to ticket holders of the Steamed Shrimp Dinners sponsored by the Chamber to be used on Wednesday evening. We had twenty-nine ticket holders use their discount for a dessert!

Porkfest 2025

by Danny Figler

On Saturday, May 31st, MHA participated at the Murfreesboro VFD Porkfest. Our President, Jimmy Moore and I stayed in the booth for the day. Special thanks to our volunteers, Ken Wolfskill, Paige Sumner, and Mary Hellmann for working with us. We did close a little early when the band and vendors were packing up. We also raffled off a vintage bottle of Elijah Craig Bourbon Whiskey. Congratulations to Michael Zhe for the winning ticket.

We sold nine publications and two Christmas ornaments during the event. Total sales were \$136, and raffle tickets sold were \$165. The weather was cloudy but no rain, a pleasant day.



Ghosts, Legends, and Lore Tour Draws Visitors to Murfreesboro

by Al Parker

October 18, 2025, was a spooky night when all of the ghosts, goblins, and spirits came out to play in the Murfreesboro Historic District. We held our Ghost Tour in the evening, and it was a great success.

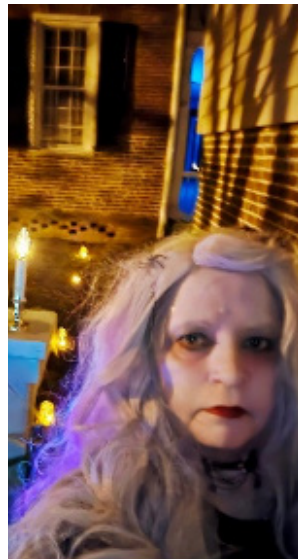
101 tickets were sold which raised \$1,830 for the association. Tour attendees were treated to the ghost stories, legends, and folklore from Murfreesboro and the surrounding area. The stories included

- A headless ghost that haunts the historic district.
- An AWOL Civil War soldier that still roams our town.
- The terrible murder of one of our most inventive citizens.
- A flirty ghost that blows gently in your ear.
- Mysterious fires that ended with one of Murfreesboro's most shocking arrests.
- The Conjure Doctor who attracted clients from all over the country.
- The ghosts that roam Chowan University... Yes, there is more than one!

The stories include many which were preserved by F. Roy Johnson in his books about the Roanoke-Chowan area. Mr. Johnson's legacy lives on in the retelling of these stories. One of the stories even featured Mr. Johnson and his print shop. You can buy a copy of some of Roy Johnson's books from the Murfreesboro Historical Association from our website for \$15 each –

www.murfreesboronc.org.

We want to thank all of our volunteers who served as storytellers and guides along the twelve-stop walk through our historic district. Thank you to Danny Figler, Paige Sumner, Mary Etta Flowers, Andrea Flowers Calvert, Michael Zhe, Katherine Utter Zhe, Harri Lovett, Armando Torres, Clay Braxton, Hazel Davis, Milton Vaughan, Booker Daniel, John Dilustro, Steve Fowler, Alice Warren, Lamar Van Brackle, Daryl Williams, Craig Dennis, David Ballew, and Mark Parker. We were also very happy to have volunteers from the student body at Chowan University - honors students Gracie Ross, Lina Danna, Madi Ford, and Alex Liggeri. The tour was written and produced by Al Parker.



New Historical Markers Coming to Murfreesboro in February

by Al Parker

The Murfreesboro Historical Association along with The Hertford County African American History Coalition and The Historic Murfreesboro Commission invite you to attend the unveiling of two new historical markers on February 7th at 1:00 pm in Murfreesboro. The North Carolina Department of Transportation in conjunction with The North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources will place a new marker on Main Street to commemorate the life and achievements of Hannah Crafts. The marker will read, "HANNAH CRAFTS ca. 1830 - ca.1905". Born enslaved, escaped Ca. 1857. Author of The Bondswoman's Narrative, based on her life, penned between 1853 and 1861. Lived two blocks north.

At 1:30 pm we will join The Hertford County African American History Coalition on Broad Street for the unveiling of a William Pomeroy Foundation marker to honor the life and achievements of George Reynolds, the first African American Postmaster in Murfreesboro.

A short program and reception will follow at the Murfree Center at 201 East Broad Street. Dr. Gregg Hecimovich will return to Murfreesboro to attend the unveiling.

Upcoming Events



The 39th Annual Candlelight Christmas Tour will be held on Friday, December 5th, and Saturday, December 6th and will include sites in the Historic District, Chowan University Chapel, as well as the Roberts-Vaughan House located on Main Street. Enjoy candle-lit walkways, live greenery decorations, horse-drawn carriage rides, a blacksmith demonstration, refreshments, and live music. We hope to provide you with an insight into the celebration of Christmas featuring simple customs and natural beauty.

Tickets for access to the historic buildings and the horse drawn carriage ride are \$25 when purchased before November 24th. Children under twelve do not need a ticket. We recommend purchasing tickets in advance and all ticket sales are final. Beginning Tuesday, November 25th and during the tour tickets are \$30 and are available at the MHA office in the Roberts-Vaughan House or online at www.murfreesboronc.org.

If you are interested in volunteering to be on the committee or during the event, contact the MHA office or Committee Chair Mr. Craig Dennis.

If you or your business are interested in sponsoring the event, contact the MHA office or our Sponsor Coordinator Lloyd Hill. We will also have a Christmas Market at the Murfree Center for Christmas shopping. You don't need a ticket to shop.

Ticket holders can get meal discounts at local area restaurants that day.

We hope you will plan to join us in Murfreesboro in December for a sentimental return to the 1800's.



MHA Collections Corner

by Connie Christison

Upgrading our Past Perfect software program to the Web Edition level has greatly improved our ability to track and detail our collection items. Thanks to Mark Parker with his information and computer technology skills and the Executive Board's action in making this happen. The program is two-fold overall, so membership, contacts, and office procedures also benefit as well as the collections program.

Members of the Collection Committee and other volunteers are busy with various projects that are extensions of Collections. On Tuesday mornings, Carole Farnham, Bonnie Revelle, and myself meet at the Murfree-Smith Law Office in the Collections workroom to conserve and record vintage clothing accessions from the 1800's and early 1900's.

Linda Hassell has completed the cataloging of our Resource Library books. These include Murfreesboro history, Hertford County history, books of interest by local authors, and books including early cooking, clothing, farming, crafts, and folklore.

On Wednesday mornings, JoAnn Gaskins, Linda Hassell, Hazel Davis, and myself meet in the Resource Library to organize general MHA information, local Murfreesboro and Hertford County history, and past MHA newsletters. A major emphasis is

organizing the collection files including accessions, documents, and photographs.

The Agricultural and Transportation Museum was chosen to demonstrate our first building with each item cataloged into the computer and marked with a laminated tag showing the item name, computer catalog number, the donor if known, and location. Any known additional information for each item can be accessed by computer. This project is 90% completed and has been an intensive project for a number of months by Hazel Davis, site manager, and me with help from Milton Vaughan, site manager. Active work is ongoing.

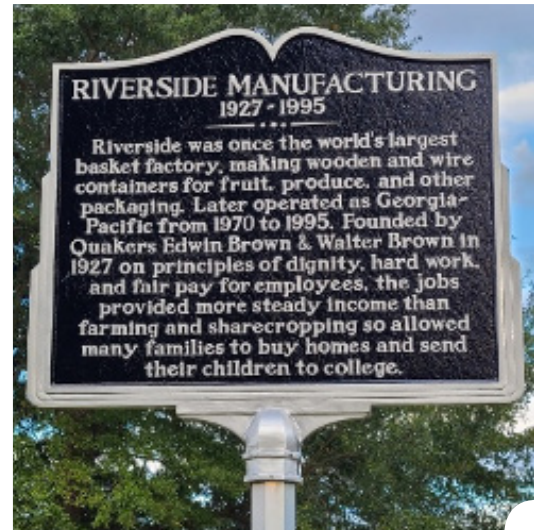


Riverside Manufacturing Marker

by Jimmy Moore

On October 4th, the Hertford County African American History Coalition dedicated an historical marker to record the story of Riverside Manufacturing at the company's former site on Broad Street at the intersection with Second Street. Founded in 1927 Riverside grew to become the world's largest basket factory. It made containers for fruit, produce and other agricultural packaging. From 1970 to 1995 it operated as Georgia-Pacific. The factory occupied a large campus between Broad Street and the Meherrin River. Unfortunately, it was destroyed in a catastrophic fire after the facility closed. Quaker brothers Edwin Brown and Walter Brown operated the business on the principles of dignity, hard work, and fair pay for all employees. Riverside was the economic engine of Murfreesboro for decades. The steady wages paid by the company provided a reliable income to families previously confined to farming and sharecropping. Working for Riverside enabled many to buy homes and to send their children to college. The Coalition is dedicated to telling the story of the African American experience in Hertford County.

This is the fourth marker they have erected in the community.



Southern Star Update

by Jimmy Moore



The last issue of King's Landing contained an article about the ship the Southern Star, which is the logo for the Murfreesboro Historical Association. In 1865 the vessel was renamed Kalorama and returned to commercial service. Around 1875 she was transferred to the West Coast. The received wisdom was that the Kalorama burned and sank near San Francisco on March 30, 1877.

However, MHA member and researcher Ken Christison has uncovered a far more interesting story. Ken's research found that the ship met her end at Ventura, California, which is 353 miles from San Francisco. Correspondence with the staff of the Ventura County Museum of Art and History revealed a compelling story of what really happened. On February 25, 1876, the Kalorama was docked in Ventura. She was bound for San Francisco with 500 hogs, two carloads of corn and 60 barrels of oil (most of it taken aboard at Hueneme and Ventura). In the words of the Ventura Signal: "Captain Elliott tried to cast loose when a sudden wind sprang up. Leaving his buoy line attached, Elliott tried to swing out and lie at anchor until the blow was over. She broke loose, her lines fouled the propeller and in 39 minutes the Kalorama was beached."

"She is, at the hour of going to press, in about four feet of water, heavily imbedded in the sand and mud, but not in critical condition" the Signal reported. Reportedly insured, with no women or children aboard, "the loss to shippers will be very light, if any."

On March 4 the stern had sprung, water had put out the Kalorama's fires, and the Signal tersely changed its mind: "The Kalorama was not insured." According to the Santa Barbara Press "nothing could have saved her from beaching but a good anchor, and that, it seems, by some unaccountable oversight or neglect was or could not be used." Both newspaper editors

clung to the optimistic view that the Kalorama was shipshape and could be floated to the bitter end.

March 11 – The Kalorama will "be fitted with casks" and towed to San Francisco with "careful, sober, prudent, and faithful Captain Elliott aboard."

April 28 – "The Kalorama will be pulled off today."

April 29 – "The big pump which has been hired at an expense of \$250 per day arrived on the Los Angeles and was put in place yesterday." The Kalorama "will probably be towed to Santa Barbara by the Los Angeles, from whence the Orizaka will take her to San Francisco."

May 6 – Water pumped out, the Kalorama was towed about 30 feet before seams burst and new leaks developed. "If casks had been supplied, Capt. Sudden thinks they could have refloated her."

The Ventura Free Press on May 13, 1876, reported "The old steamer Kalorama is fast breaking up, and in a few days more will be nothing but a mass of broken timbers. Workmen were able to salvage some pieces of rigging and machinery, but the ship was a total loss. Ken found an article stating that the figurehead of the Kalorama was on display in the Golden Gate Saloon in Ventura in 1877. However, he has been unable to trace it after that.

You will recall that the ship had a cargo of 500 pigs. As the waves tore the ship apart, the frightened pigs jumped in the water and swam to shore. Then they ran through Ventura. The town turned out to catch the pigs, who disappeared into backyards and barns. When summer came, the smell of barbecue filled the air.

The Ventura Museum has some artifacts from the wreck. One of the streets in town is named for the lost ship. So ended the vessel that had come into existence on the banks of the Meherrin as the Southern Star.



Office Hours
Monday–Thursday
9:00am–1:00pm

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Schedule of Events for 2026

February 7, 2026 (Saturday)
Hannah Crafts Historical Marker Dedication &
Reception
Hertford Academy

March 21, 2026 (rain date March 28th)
MHA Yard Sale
Roberts-Vaughan Property • Public Sale

March 25, 2026 (Wednesday)
4th Graders Historical Tour
Historic District

April 17, 2026 (Friday)
Annual Meeting & Reception
Murfree Center • Noon–2:00 PM

May 2, 2026 (Saturday)
MHA Kentucky Derby Day
Walter Reed House Property

May 30, 2026 (Saturday)
Murfreesboro VFD Porkfest 26
Publications Sale

July 29, 2026 (Wednesday) – August 1, 2026 (Saturday)
Watermelon Festival
Hot Fudge Cake Fundraiser • Hertford Academy

October 27, 2026 (Tuesday)
Soup & Sandwich Fundraiser
Murfree Center

December 4–5, 2026 (Friday & Saturday)
40th Annual Candlelight Christmas Tour