

# Lives and Times

June 2007

Quarterly **NEWSLETTER** of the  
Caswell County Historical Association, Incorporated  
P.O. Box 278, Yanceyville, N.C. 27379

VOLUME XXX, Number Two  
Sallie P. Anderson, Editor  
assisted by Lauren Eakin & Lib McPherson

## **Bartlett Yancey Reviewed**

What welcome news it is that a painting of Bartlett Yancey has been given to our Museum and can be viewed at our next meeting! The Caswell County Historical Association and its members have done their part with portraits of Bartlett and his wife Nancy Grave on page 142 of our History and several articles on the family in our Heritage. What we hope to pass on future generations of Caswell citizens is expressed in Article 838 on page 609 of the HERITAGE and we quote:

"Bartlett Yancey was one of the greatest men North Carolina ever produced. His massive frame was a fit testament to the large and luminous intelligence which animated it. In forensic oratory he was the peer of Mr. Gaston, while in political tact and address he was greatly his superior. When speaker of the United State House of Representatives, Mr. Clay, often when Committee of the Whole, called Mr. Yancey to the chair, and even under the trying emergency of such a comparison, the North Carolinian suffered no derogation. His consummate abilities were adorned and enhanced by a bland elegance of manner that was matchless in his day." The author of the article was the late Mary McAden Satterfield who did not state the source of this information, but it was obviously taken from a contemporary tribute of the 1830s expressed after the illness and death in his prime (1785-1827).

At the end of her article Mary named the descendants of Bartlett and Nancy. Before this she had contributed a genealogy of the Yancey family to the NEWSLETTER among its earliest issues and the NEWSLETTER continued to note any items on the subject over the years. As the historic house on the outskirts of Yanceyville went through various stages of ownership and restoration, including the family cemetery and the law office, we saw the place evolve from a sad to a very happy state - a pluperfect restoration with a Thomas Day staircase plus a fine restaurant which attracts visitors to the county to trod the hallowed halls.

Mary's list of descendants who lived to have descendants (or not in one case) is a source of further newsworthy items. For instance, the oldest girl, Frances, married Dr. Henry McAden, as will appear in the comprehensive McAden Family, a large book co-authored by Mary and the late Dr. Ben Lacy Rose. Mary used to tell how her husband Banks threatened to sleep in another room because of Dr. Rose's late-night calls to Mary while they were working on the book.

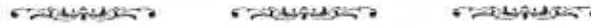
The second child was Mary Catherine Yancey, who married Giles Mebane of the family for whom the town of Mebane was named. They lived at Bartlett Yancey's plantation on the Dan River which he had name "Oakland." The Yanceyville home was named "Summer Hill" and was built after the other residence because the summer climate was more pleasant at Yanceyville than at Blanche on the Dan. We traced the burning of "Oakland" in 1919 and the shipping of the bricks by the then owner (not a Mebane) to Chicago where they were used in houses there. One of the descendants in South Boston loaned us the mourning picture of "Summer Hill" and the tomb of the son who was stricken with a disease while at college and died in November of the same year his father died of most possibly pneumonia. The boy was named Rufus Augustus. The third daughter was Virginia Marie who changed her name to Virginia Bartlett and who married George W. Swepson and you may see the gorgeous silver service he brought or sent her from Florida.

The next daughter was Anne Elizabeth who married Thomas J. Womack. She read every book in her father's law library and was a justice of the peace in the neighborhood, so they said. The Womacks lived at "Summer Hill" and it was passed down through that branch to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She was so brave that when she went to take food to her husband, who was imprisoned in arrests of all suspected Klansmen who murdered "Chicken" Stephens, she threatened to shoot the Yankee guard who wasn't fast enough about letting her take in the hot stew.

The second son, Sydney Yancey, married Henrietta Williams Graves, no doubt some sort of cousin. One little son died in infancy. Most of the deaths are marked by tombstones at the Yanceyville

house. The youngest daughter, Carolina Louisa Virginia, married Lemuel Mebane (yes, he was kin to Giles) and they lived at "Oakland" for a long time. Mrs. Bartlett Yancey survived her husband by many years, living in the much added to "Summer Hill" until 1857, and the Mebane family so generously gave her portrait, along with others, to Richmond-Miles Museum. Nancy's is the work of native Caswell artist William Anderson Roberts.

[If any retractions on the info are necessary, see newsletter editor Sallie P. Anderson.]



## Poteat's Old School

by Sallie P. Anderson

"School days, school days,  
Dear old Golden Rule days!  
Readin' and Writin' and 'Rithmetic  
Taught to the tune of a hickory stick!..."

This once-popular little ditty offers a more or less accurate description of the primary and elementary education system of our forebears. In Caswell County, the children flocked to neighborhood schools conducted in one-room buildings by one teacher. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Caswell County was liberally dotted with these humble halls of learning.

However, as the century progressed, so did the North Carolina Public Education system, and by the year 1985, M.Q. Plumbee, career-long schoolman and a co-founder of the Caswell County Historical Association, doubted that there were any "old field schools" left in the County, but thought we could investigate and see if an "Old School" could be located, moved to the Old Courthouse Complex and preserved as a public exhibit like the "Old Jail" which was already standing and maintained as a public exhibit, the project being on lease to the Historical Association.

The October 1986, Vol. IX, #4, CCHA **NEWSLETTER** had a picture and three-page article featuring Poteat's Old School "located a little way off the County Home Road near the junction with the Hamer Road." The illustration was from the Association's **Architectural Inventory** of Caswell County's historic buildings, Photo 216, p. 149. The proximity to Yanceyville plus the apparent fair condition encouraged the Association to begin raising funds to add a schoolhouse to the visitor attractions of the Old Courthouse complex.

The October 1987 issue of the CCHA **NEWSLETTER** had the photograph from *The Caswell Messenger* showing the building rounding the Square being towed by a local trucking company, and we quote: "Bud Swann directs his brother Don around a corner on the Old Courthouse Square in Yanceyville Thursday as Don tows an old one-room schoolhouse. The school was moved from the northern end of County Home Road to a location near the Old Jail. The Future Farmers of America chapter at Bartlett Yancey High School initiated the move and is restoring the structure, which was donated by James Kent. FFA Advisor Cy Vernon said the help of the N.C. Department of Transportation (which issued a special permit to the FFA for the move), CENTEL, CP&L, the Caswell Sheriff's Department, the N.C. Highway Patrol and, of course, Swann Trucking, was essential to the effort."

Poteat's Old School was set in place at its new home after a two-hour journey on Tuesday, Sept. 15 under the supervision of Mr. Vernon, who had directed the building of the pillars before the move so that "though not open yet it was viewed by the swarms of visitors who flooded Yanceyville for the Hoedown" Sept. 26-27, 1987.

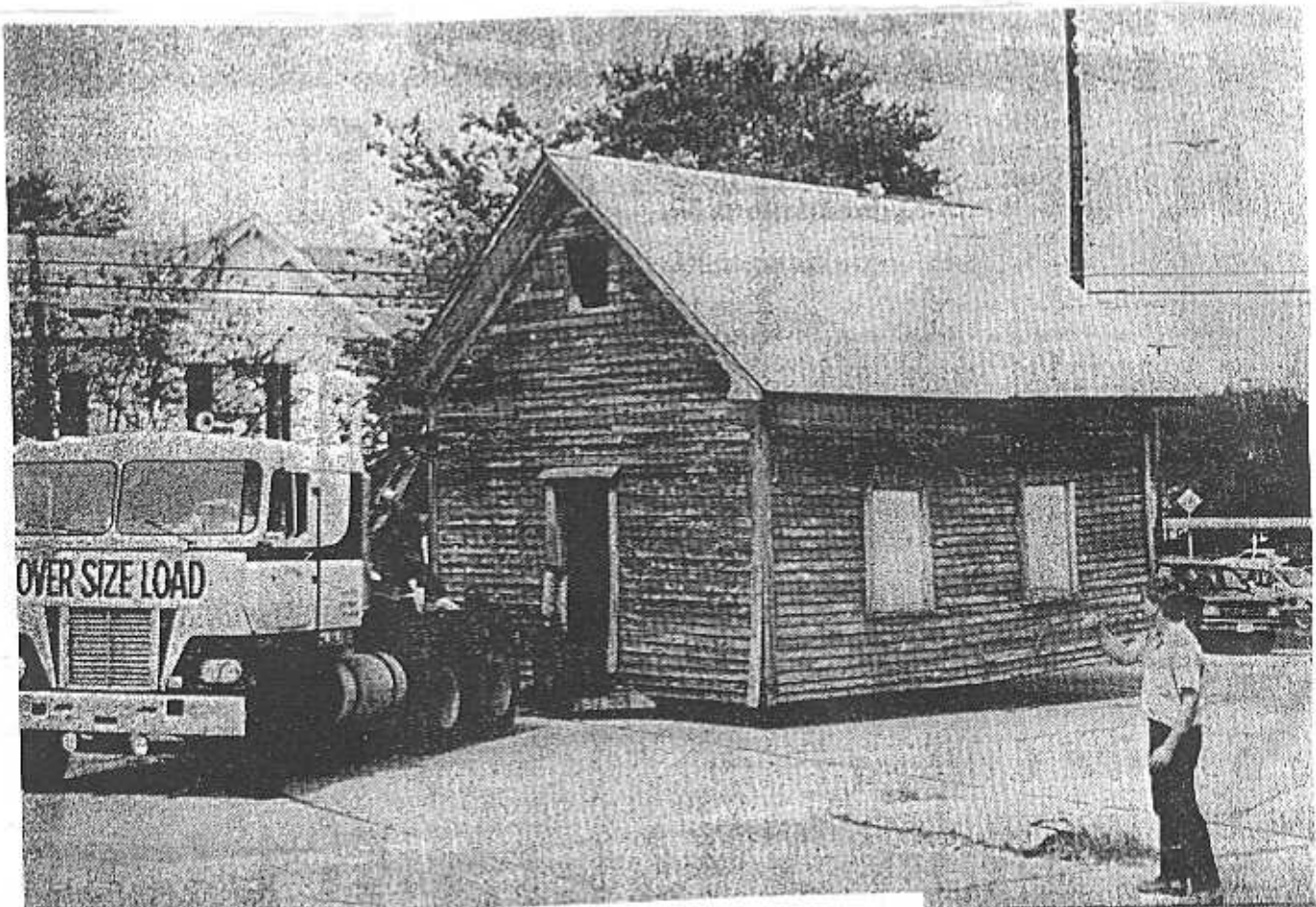
Mrs. Inez Poteat Calvert, a granddaughter of Albert Lindsay Poteat whose land the school was built on, has kept an outstanding record of the Old School in a sizable scrapbook. It contains a wonderful collection of articles, newspaper clippings, photographs, letters and copies of legal documents all related to Poteat's Old School. On March 27, 2007, she came over from her home at 2516 Beechwood Lane, Danville Virginia 24541 and donated the scrapbook to the CCHA's Richmond-Miles Historical Museum on the Square in Yanceyville.

In the scrapbook we can trace the process of securing a neighborhood school in Caswell County almost a century ago. The later Register of Deeds, J.B. Blaylock, had preserved a Minute Book of the Board of Education and a copy of Pages 497,3 and 37 will show that a new School District was cut off from Yanceyville District beginning with an acre of land owned by the Poteat family. A copy of the deed dated April 30, 1913 shows that A. L. Poteat and wife Manervia conveyed for the sum of \$5.00 one acre of their land to the County Board of Education. Board members were T.J. Hatchett, R.I. Newman and L.A. Gwynn. The deed was not probated until July 8, 1913, at which time R.L. Mitchell, Clerk of Court, had the privilege of "privately examining" the wife to make sure she had signed of her own free will. There had been the understanding, though not stated in the deed, that if there ceased to be a school on this land the title should revert to the Poteats. Also not stated in the Deed was that the parents who signed the petition for a new school, officially called Patrons, would pay 1/2 of the expense for the building while the County would pay the salary for one teacher.

The Patron's Committee was composed of A.L. Poteat, George Johnston and J.C. Smith, who learned that the Board let the contract to S.M. Woods for \$250.00. Mr. Sam Woods was a pioneer contractor of Purley, several of whose buildings still stand.

# THE CASWELL MESSENGER

Thursday, September 24, 1987



Greg Hohn/The Caswell Messenger

CHRISTMAS 2006

May your Holidays be ever Joyous and God Bless us every one!

In this time and place last year, this newsletter started: "This last year has sped by so quickly and brought many changes for us and I'm sure for most of you also." "Change is not always pleasant but inevitable." How prophetic those words seem just one year later. As many, but not all of you know, our mom Alma L. Kukucka died quietly and peacefully at home on a crisp sun-swept Spring afternoon last April 18th, 2006 at the age of 68 years when her favorite cherry tree was at peak in full pink bloom. As my Aunt Helen said that day, "The Lord picked a rose!" News of this event changed our world as it surely has changed yours!

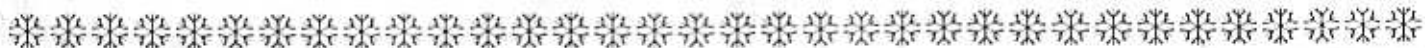
Mom kept mum about her health - a trait that seems to run in her family. Most of you know that she broke both of her legs in an automobile accident in late 1976 but more bad news arose in early November 2002 when mom noticed blood in her stool. Her primary care doctor immediately recommended a colonoscopy exam. The Saturday evening following Thanksgiving 2002, mom met me after church where she told me that she had been diagnosed with colon cancer. We wasted no time scheduling surgery to remove the cancerous part of her large intestines which was done by mid December 2002. Biopsy results of some nearby intestinal lymph nodes during this same surgery indicated that the cancer had initially spread beyond her colon, so her surgeon recommended chemotherapy which mom started in January 2003. A few months after completing her first round of chemotherapy, a CAT scan indicated that the cancer had spread to a single focal area in her liver where it remained intact for the next 2-3 rounds of chemotherapy which brought us to August 2005. By this time, more potent drugs were being used to combat the cancer which resulted in more undesirable side effects. At this time, mom wanted to pursue other therapies including possibly another surgery and/or a new experimental cyber-knife procedure to try and remove the liver tumor which was about the size of a quarter. After seeking a couple of different medical opinions, no surgeon was comfortable in operating on mom as the tumor was lodged in between the critical blood supplies leading to and from her liver. The only feasible alternative remaining was a new procedure known as cyber-knife therapy which promised pinpoint targeting of the tumor using stereo-radiochemistry. While the doctors were initially extremely optimistic (as all of her doctors seemed to be dating back to her initial diagnosis in late 2002), ultimately, it just didn't work in mom's favor. There was the final promise: a new chemotherapeutic drug to be approved by the FDA sometime in mid 2006 but mom just didn't make it that long!

Throughout mom's course of her disease, we both lived our lives fully trying not to dwell on the possible dire outcome. As mom noted in her Xmas newsletters over the last few years, I incorporated her into business trips I made to Germany, Austria, the United Kingdom, Florida and finally Hawaii this past March 2006. Considering all the airline travel I've made over the years, I earned enough United airline miles to fly both of us to Honolulu for a week where we stayed at the Hilton Hawaiian Village in a suite made for a king. Little did both of us know that approximately one month after our return home from this trip that mom would pass from this world. While I knew that I might lose mom one day, her death really took all of us by surprise. I had the fortune of spending everyday with her during the last 6 months of her life. But looking back, I didn't see the subtle changes and setbacks which are now evident when I review the last pictures I took of mom in the final months of her life. I spent mom's last night holding her hand while stealing glimpses of a full vernal moon which hung low in the southern night sky before our journey together on this Earth ended.

Mom and I discussed her final wishes on Holy Thursday, three days before Easter 2006. We had mom thru all of Lent only to lose her mere 40 hours after Easter ended. Mom wanted to be buried in a family cemetery named Calloway near Newland, North Carolina where a number of her Clark family ancestors have been buried including her father. Many years ago, mom became dear friends with Myrtle Clark who is the wife of Harry Clark who was one of the brothers of mom's father. Mom learned about her father's passing during the Labor Day weekend in 1982 but she was unable to attend her father's funeral. In all those intervening years, she never knew exactly where her father Carless Lee Clark was buried. Then last June 2005 when mom and I visited with Aunt Myrtle, the subject of her father came up and Aunt Myrtle said that he was buried on a mountaintop only a few miles away from her home. Well, Aunt Myrtle, mom and I couldn't get in the car fast enough to beat a path up to Calloway cemetery. Within 10 minutes of stepping foot on that mountaintop which enjoys a clear unobstructed view of Grandfather mountain, mom turned to me and said she wanted to be buried up there! The cemetery looked full and Aunt Myrtle didn't know who we might contact to get permission for possible burial. So when mom and I discussed her final wishes almost a year later on Holy Thursday, she suggested cremation with the request that I spread her ashes on that mountaintop. On April 22, 2006, a Catholic mass was held for mom that concluded with the hymn Amazing Grace. I held onto her ashes until June when Steven (her first born) and I made a trip down to Newland. On Saturday, June 24th which was one full year to the day after mom first stepped foot in Calloway cemetery, Steven and I met up with mom's half sister Judy Lee Clark to spread her ashes. Before heading back to Maryland, Steven and I then spent some wonderful time with mom's mother's sister kids named Bob, Benny and Sue in her beautiful new home in Kingsport, Tennessee. Mom's final resting place is a whole 496 long miles from the family home in Kingsville, MD. Alma L. Kukucka is survived by her own mother Beatrice Walls who still lives in Bell, California her four children Steven, Mark, Douglas and Alma Lee, her granddaughter Marian and grand step-daughters Cathryn & Jill.

"A mother's love is a little bit of springtime to carry in your heart your whole life through." ♥

Mark Kukucka



## **CCHA Summer Meeting to feature NC Humanities Council Road Scholar and Presentation of Bartlett Yancey Portrait**

On **June 10 at 3:00 p.m.** the public is invited to participate in the Historical Association **Summer Meeting** in the **Yanceyville Presbyterian Church's Bason Fellowship Hall**, featuring two presentations that are significant to the history of Caswell County.

The association will receive a treasured portrait of a Caswell Founding Father Attorney Bartlett Yancey, who served in the NC House (and also Speaker of the House) and as a Representative to the US Congress from this district. Death at an early age cut short a promising career that very well may have included service as Governor of North Carolina. The portrait will be presented by Mrs. Trish Gwynn, whose late husband, Jule Gwynn, was a Bartlett Yancey descendant. Other members of the Bartlett Yancey family will be present also.

A grant from the NC Humanities Council Road Scholar program has enabled the association to feature Tom Magnuson, whose topic will be "Trading Paths and England's Contact Era in North Carolina," with emphasis on these paths in Caswell County and their impact on the social and economic development of the county. He will bring this into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by showing how this early transportation infrastructure has given us the framework for tourism planning and development.

Long before the English government arrived in North Carolina, Carolinians governed themselves. In that frontier zone lived a substantial population of Indians, Europeans and Africans who blended cultures and populations to produce many of the characteristics we now call "southern." Quakers, former indentured, runaway slaves, whole families outlawed in Virginia and opportunists of all stripes found a place in Carolina. Tom Magnuson will explore this story with the audiences and will address such questions as why was Quaker Meadows Quaker Meadows before the Quakers came to town? Where did the Indians go? Was distilling the most efficient way to market one's corn in a country with no markers? What are the limits of anarchy? What is the cost of order?

Tom Magnuson is the founder and CEO of the Trading Path Association (TPA). The TPA is a non-profit organization committed to finding and protecting remnants of the Contact Era in the southeast. It does so by finding the old trade routes of England's first frontier, the "backcountry" of the southeast (this includes Caswell County). In those old days, people lived mere feet from the paths, trails and roads so as to keep informed by passing traffic. Our remaining archaeology, the heirlooms of our ancestors, await discovery along these old routes.

Prior to founding the TPA, Magnuson enjoyed an unconventional high-tech career, first in the integrated circuit industry and government service and later in the software business. By education a military historian, Magnuson stumbled on the importance of old roads and the TPA's methods for finding them while studying military geopolitics more than 25 years ago. Saving the remnants became possible only in the 1990s with the development of landscape preservation initiatives. In 1998, when he learned of these initiatives, Magnuson left the software world and immediately formed the TPA to begin protecting the landmarks and artifacts of our common past. His presentation will include a focus on the landmarks and artifacts that we see everyday in Caswell County but probably do not perceive!



## New Acquisitions and More

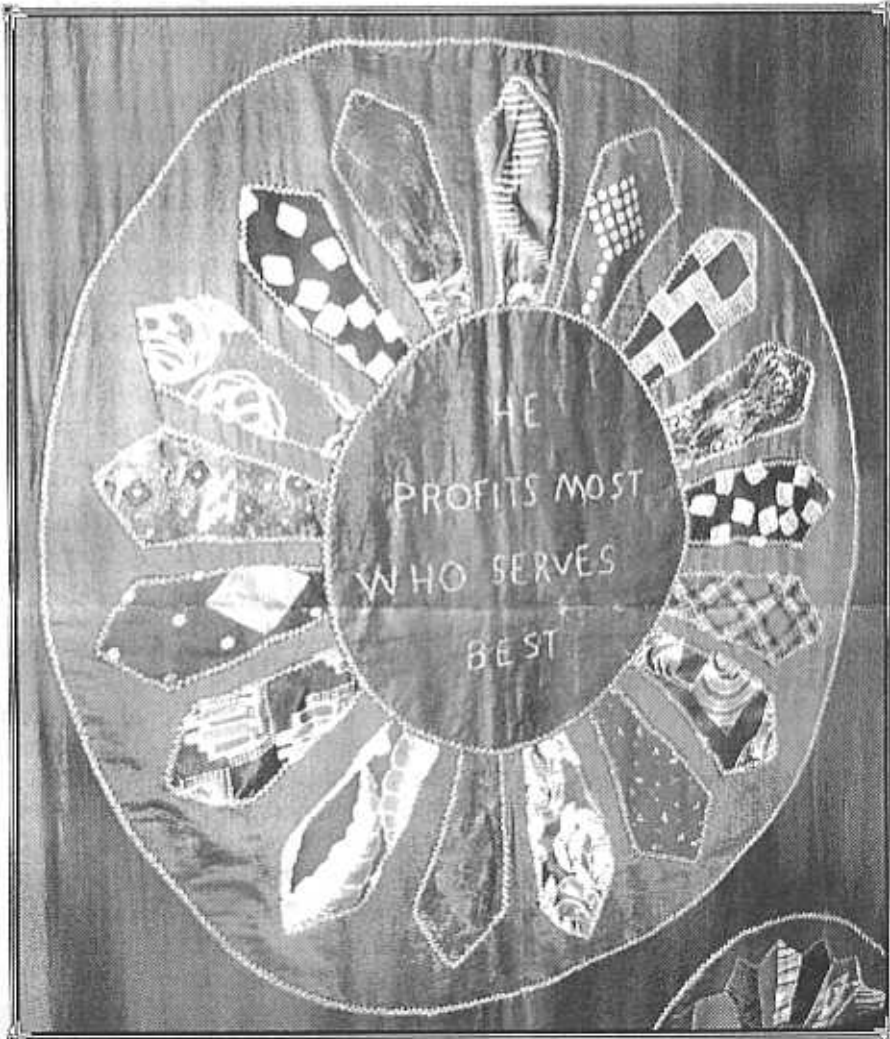
by Lib McPherson

Some exciting things have been happening in the association this year. Because of Maud Florance Gatewood's reputation as a premier Southern artist and because her childhood home, the Graves-Florance-Gatewood House, is the location of our Richmond-Miles Museum, our volunteers hear frequent questions about her work. We had none of her work, but could share some family history. That changed in 2006, when heirs of the late Dorothy Yarrow Zimmernan donated three of Maud's early works to the museum. "Dot" Zimmernan was a life-long mentor, teacher and confidante of Maud and was entrusted with some of Maud's most treasured works when Maud studied abroad on a Fulbright Scholarship.

Early this year, we received word from Lee Farmer, Administrator of Maud's estate, that we would receive some of Maud's works from her personal collection along with other artifacts that will preserve her family history, particularly her father's record as Sheriff of Caswell County for 25 years. Fifteen of her works are included in this valuable contribution. Volunteers have been very busy preparing the room in which Maud was born to receive these works, which will be hung by curators from Duke University's Art Museum. So don't come to see them yet! The opening of this exhibit will be announced when it is ready.

Special thanks are due to President Karen Oestreicher, Vice-President Cy Vernon and Board Member Cecil Page for their diligent work on this project.

Board member Karen Avants continues to pursue significant historical records related to the county. In a previous newsletter, you heard about her work transcribing records of the tobacco industry and slave trading as recorded in the ledgers of Yanceyville's Warehouseman-Slave Trader, Dr. Robinson. These valuable records were among the papers sold in the estate sale of his great-granddaughter, Mary Kerr Motz. The collector who purchased them extracted the information he wanted and put them up for auction in late March. Because of Karen's commitment to the



importance of these records remaining in Caswell County, we expect this to happen. The UNC Southern and NC Collections covet these for their archives and offered to work with CCHA to establish the Caswell County Collection in a controlled environment in exchange for having this information available for graduate research. This is a priceless opportunity, for it also offers us a cost-effective way to preserve other valuable ledgers that are in our collection. The Board is pursuing this. In order for this to happen we must have a major donor or grantor. If you are interesting in being a partner in this venture, contact a CCHA Board member for assistance.

In March, the Board conducted a brainstorming session concerning the needs and priorities of the Association. The following priorities were set.

1. Establishing a sound financial base for maintaining the facilities and artifacts and operating the museum.
2. Upgrading the facilities and artifacts, including winterizing the garage storage building for use as additional exhibit space.
3. Increasing membership, especially of local residents, to support the museum via volunteerism and financial support for the ongoing operational costs.
4. Developing the museum resources as an educational resource to support and improve the teaching of local history in the area schools.

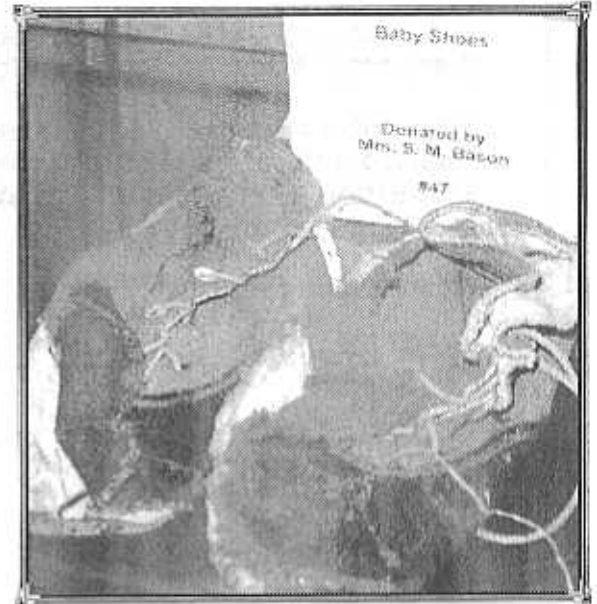
Committees are being established to address these issues. Grant applications are being developed as a first step. A membership campaign will be launched as soon as that committee is organized. The Gift Shop will be revamped, and a number of modest changes will be made in existing exhibits.

The Yanceyville Rotary Club has asked CCHA to allow it to maintain the Poteat School, our one room schoolhouse, which is located back of the Historic Courthouse. This is a very valuable contribution. A start has been made on refurbishing the jailer's quarters in the Old Jail, but more is needed. These quarters are being furnished as they might have been furnished in the first half of last century (1900-1950). We have a bed, sewing machine, settle with matching chairs, some old dishes and a rug from that period. We need more artifacts for this project.

Our faithful volunteers are keeping the museum open Wednesday-Friday from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. These folks include Janice Vernon, Mitzi Vernon, Helen Hooper, Karen Oestreicher, Clark Graves, Forrest Altman, Frances Murphy, Larry Foster, Will Woodard, Sallie Anderson, Benton Kay Thompson, June Gwynn, Katherine Watlington and Roger Ward. Some new volunteers are getting oriented now. We need more help. Call Karen Oestreicher or Janice Vernon if you are willing to give a few hours each month.

Our faithful editor, Sallie Anderson, with the help of Lib McPherson and Lauren Eakin, is producing our newsletter. Karen Oestreicher and various volunteers "fold, stamp, and mail" the finished product.

**REMINDER: IF you have not paid your dues for 2007, there will be a red dot on your label. Please remit. Your support is very important!!!**



CGHA annual dues of \$20 for individuals and \$30 for family memberships are payable by January of each year for the calendar year. To renew your membership, please complete this form and mail to the **Caswell County Historical Association**, Attn: Treasurer Mary Jo Henderson, Box 278, Yanceyville, NC 27379 with your check or money order.

All members receive the Association newsletter 4 times a year with information about Caswell County families, news of historic preservation in the county and information about Historical Association events. Volunteers are needed in the museum, on committees and other projects. Tell us how you will help.

**Membership for 2007** New      Renewal      (circle one)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Payment: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Here are my dues for 2007      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ I would like to be a volunteer. I would like to

Here's a gift for the Association      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ help with: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL ENCLOSED      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Caswell County Historical Association**  
**P.O. Box 278**  
**Yanceyville, NC 27379**  
[www.rootsweb.com/~ncccha/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~ncccha/)



**RED DOTS indicate  
2007 DUES are due.**