

# CHIPLEY HISTORICAL CENTER

The Official Newsletter, Pine Mountain, Georgia



## From the Chair:

What a year this has been! Our many accomplishments this year include:

- Completing the new building (finally!)
- Reorganizing and revamping displays
- Reopening in September

Upon reopening and looking at the foot traffic in Pine Mountain on Saturdays, we decided to remain open on Saturday afternoons. We have had nearly 600 visitors since reopening, and almost half of them have been on Saturdays.

In addition to the work at the Historical Center, we also sponsored seven programs on the Pine Mountain area through a grant from the Georgia Council for the Humanities. The last program from this grant will be on January 30, 2022 and the topic will be Horace King, bridge builder.

We will continue to improve and expand the Center's facilities and activities through two more grants in 2022. One of these grants will allow us to better preserve and protect the artifacts entrusted to us, while the other will allow us to present some hands-on programs in 2022. As always, I invite you to become a volunteer.

*Happy Holidays from all of us at CHC!*

Sincerely,

Lou Brackett

Chairman and Lover of Dusty Old Things

# 2021 Federal and State Grant Support

## By Cindy Bowden

We were very fortunate to win three state and national level grants in 2021. The first was from the Georgia Council for the Humanities which allowed us to bring in seven experts in humanities from around Georgia. The project was titled "A Walk Through Time in Pine Mountain and the Surrounding Areas."

The programs included:

- "Native and Historical Georgia Plants and their Uses Through Time" with speaker Allen Sistrunk, originally from Duran Georgia.
- "Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Pine Mountain Area" with speaker Kaye Minchew.
- "Troup Factory: Archaeological Investigations of a Nineteenth Century Mill Site" with speaker Patrick Severts.
- "Preserving Your Family History" with speaker David Owings.
- "Genealogy and How to do Research" with speaker Ken Thomas.
- "Jimmy Carter, Citizen of the South" with speaker Kaye Minchew.
- "Trains, Plantations and Transportation, History of Railroads in West GA" with speaker Cindy Bowden.

The second grant was from the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council (GHRAC). We were awarded funds to purchase several pieces of equipment we need for proper preservation.

The last grant was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the United States Congress as part of the American Rescue Plan. With this grant we will be able to:

- Hire a public relations consultant to help spread the word about our upcoming exhibitions and programs.
- Offer 3 hands-on family workshops this summer.
- Transform the back garden by the caboose into an outdoor display.

### Upcoming Events:

**In January we will be opening a new exhibit on Horace King. We will also feature a program on Jan. 30 by Kaye Minchew titled "Horace King, a 19th Century Master Builder, Engineer and Former Slave." Kaye worked with Dr. Richard Bailey - a Montgomery historian; Steve Murray, Director of the Alabama Department of Archives & History; and with the Georgia Tourism Development to mark King's grave in LaGrange.**

# A Dream Come True!

## By Martha Hartley

After the seventh annual meeting of the Chipley Historical Center in 1992, the then director, Lucille Rup commented:

"And then we had a dream. We want to build a museum to show the way of life as it was years ago... this building [the original Center and old City Hall] is becoming too crowded. We own the lot on the corner next door free and clear. We would like to construct a two-story building on this lot ... using both buildings and having a museum and genealogical center would be a wonderful asset to our community."



In the beginning...

And now, over thirty years, later that dream is a reality. It began in July 1984 when two children of Chipley, Lillian Champion and Alf Mullins, and an adopted son, Franklin Davenport, met in mayor Jim Edgar's office to discuss the growing community interest in establishing a center to preserve local history.

Five months later the organizational meeting of the CHC was held and the first officers were elected, Franklin Davenport as chairman, Lewis Bell as vice-chairman, Lillian Champion as secretary and Barbara Ewell as treasurer. As noted earlier, Lillian Champion was a "Chipley girl," known for many years as the unofficial historian of Chipley. A prolific writer, she regularly had columns in local newspapers; a collection of those writings was published in 2008 as Pine Mountain Re-views.

Native son Alf Mullins never held an office in the CHC; nevertheless, he and his wife were instrumental in its beginning and served in various roles



**L-R: Lewis G. Bell, Morton Hoffman, and H.A. Mullins. Hoffman was a newcomer and amateur historian who lived briefly in Pine Mountain.**

for many years. He was a Navy veteran, a farmer, a merchant (his store was on the present Wells Fargo site), and later a rural mail carrier.

His daughter, Mary Ruth Mullins, is the immediate past chairman of the CHC; and she and her sister Ann live in the Pine Mountain home now occupied by the Mullins family since 1927.

Franklin Davenport came to Chipley to meet his pen-pal, home town girl, Mary Ann Stripling. They wrote while he was stationed in Korea. On his way from his North Carolina home to his new duty station at Fort Stewart in Hinesville in 1959, he came to meet and propose to Mary Ann! On his



**Lillian Champion and Franklin Davenport**

second visit, four months later, he married Mary Ann, and has been here ever since, retiring as Town Superintendent after 34 years. He is a founding member of the Center, chairman for many years, and still an active board member, service of over thirty-seven years which perhaps sets a record in the annals of local history centers.

Lewis Bell is another adopted son, a native of Carroll County who was quite familiar with Harris County and Chipley because of his service as a trooper with the Georgia State Patrol in this area. After his retirement as a lieutenant colonel with the patrol and deputy commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Safety, he and his wife moved to Pine Mountain from LaGrange in 1978. Like father, like daughter, Barbara Bell Ewell served as one of the CHC first officers. She also served as the Town Clerk from 1977 until 1999. And continuing the family tradition of service to the CHC, the current treasurer is Elaine Bell Beall, another daughter.





**Miss Exa Myhand, being one of the oldest residents, cut the ribbon to open the original center.**

Scores of others, natives and newcomers, in the early days and continuing to the present, have over these years devoted time and energy and funds to make the CHC a local point of pride for homefolks and an attraction for visitors. There is a large scrapbook containing many pictures of those who were instrumental in its beginning.

Significant dates in the CHC history are: Official opening of the original Center September 1985, named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1986, incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization in 1990. (Donations are always welcome!). The Center was instrumental in establishing the Veterans Memorial plaque across from the post office and has sponsored the annual Veterans Day program for years, along with placing flags at veterans' graves.

Today, after the opening of the addition to the Center, it is new and improved. Newcomers, Lou Brackett and Cindy Bowden, the current chair and vice-chair, have brought over 50 years of experience in museum and public history work. Grant applications have been successful and displays and exhibits have been created which showcase the history of the area times before Chipley was a town. A variety of programs have been offered, ranging from FDR to railroads to native plant life. Records are being digitized and a systematic inventory system of the collection has been established.

CHC is indeed new, in many ways, and certainly improved; however, it, thankfully, retains a hometown Chipley flavor and atmosphere. The Center is the Chipley Historical Center, not the Chipley Museum. To be sure, there is appropriate protection and preservation of items and information on exhibits for a self-guided tour. However, more importantly and in keeping with the wishes of the founders, CHC is a welcoming place where visitors can browse and reminisce with volunteers, many of whom are natives, and share memories of the good old days in Chipley.

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TO BECOME A MEMBER**

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