The Newsletter of the **Lincoln County Historical Association**

The Lincoln County Historian

2022
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For Everything There is a Season

Rich history and a new role for First Presbyterian Church

The sale of the building at 114 West Main St., commonly known as First Presbyterian Church, marks the end of an era, but a new owner and a new purpose for this iconic downtown structure.

Of course, this is not the first home of the pioneer Presbyterians. The foundations of Lincolnton's First Presbyterian congregation were laid long before this building was even a dream.

The earliest residents of the town of Lincolnton were primarily Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Reformed. In 1771, they constructed a building made of logs on what is now the corner of South Aspen and Church Streets, a meeting house for this budding village, and called it Emanuels. In 1788, when town commissioners of the newly formed town of Lincolnton issued what is believed to be the first church deed recorded in Lincoln County, deeded the two-acre lot to Christian Reinhardt and Andrew Heddick as "Trustees for the Societies of Dutch Presbyterians and Dutch Lutherans of said town."

According to Dan Barefoot, who conducted extensive research for the 175th anniversary of First Presbyterian Church, services were conducted in German, the native language of the first resident ministers, Lutheran minister Johann Gottfried Arends (Arndt) and Andrew Loretz, a Reformed minister.

1795 brought the first resident Presbyterian minister in Dr. Humphrey Hunter of the Concord Presbytery. With Lincoln County under his charge, Presbyterians in Lincolnton heard their first Presbyterian sermon, and possibly the first spoken in English. With the

Continued on page 6

The Lincoln County Historian is published six times a year by the Lincoln County Historical Association for LCHA members and contributors.

Story submissions and ideas for upcoming issues are welcomed and encouraged.

Past issues of The Historian are posted on our website.

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Letters to the Association

K. Whaley-Oddy

I am interested in learning more about the Wacaser family. Daniel Wacaser and Jane Caroline Stacy married and had Mary Alice Wacaser Stacy. Mary is my 2nd Great Grandmother, and I grew up in Dalton, GA. My parents still live about 10 minutes from Spring Place and the Chief Vann house. I would love to come by the research center and learn more about the Wacasers in NC and possibly the Stacys who lived in Lincoln/Catawba for a few years in the early 1800s (near Sherrill's Ford, so I've heard).

Briefly, the first record found of this family line is in 1790 U.S. census. Jacob Wacaser and family consisted of three sons and three females, presumably a wife and two daughters, listed as residents of Salisbury District, Rowan County.

The three brothers, Jacob, George, and John Wacaser started in Lincolnton, North Carolina and moved to Georgia in 1837. It is thought that Jacob moved and settled close to Hot Springs, Arkansas. The youngest brother, John, moved back to North Carolina and died as a comparatively young man. George stayed in Georgia.

From information found on FindaGrave.com, George's first wife was probably Mae Paige and their children were Frank, Mary and George, Jr. Next he married Margaret Rhinehart. She died giving birth to their only child, John, in 1818. He married Rebecca Rudisill in 1819. They had 11 children: Jacob, Mary Ann, William Franklin, Dicy, Susannah, Robert, Nancy, Alexander, and Anderson born in Lincolnton. After they moved to Goergia they had two more children, William Henry and David Baxter.

Daniel C. Wacaser (1826-1911) was the son of George Jr. 1803-1886) and Sarah Chapman Wacaster (1844-1915), born in Lincoln County. He and his first wife, your Jane Catherine Stacy (1836-1866) had six children, the youngest being your second great-grandmother. Two wives and another four children followed, and he is buried at Austin Creek Baptist Church Cemetery in Blount County, Alabama.

We have extensive information on the Wacaser/Wacasser/Wacaster family in our Research Library. Please come visit us when you can.

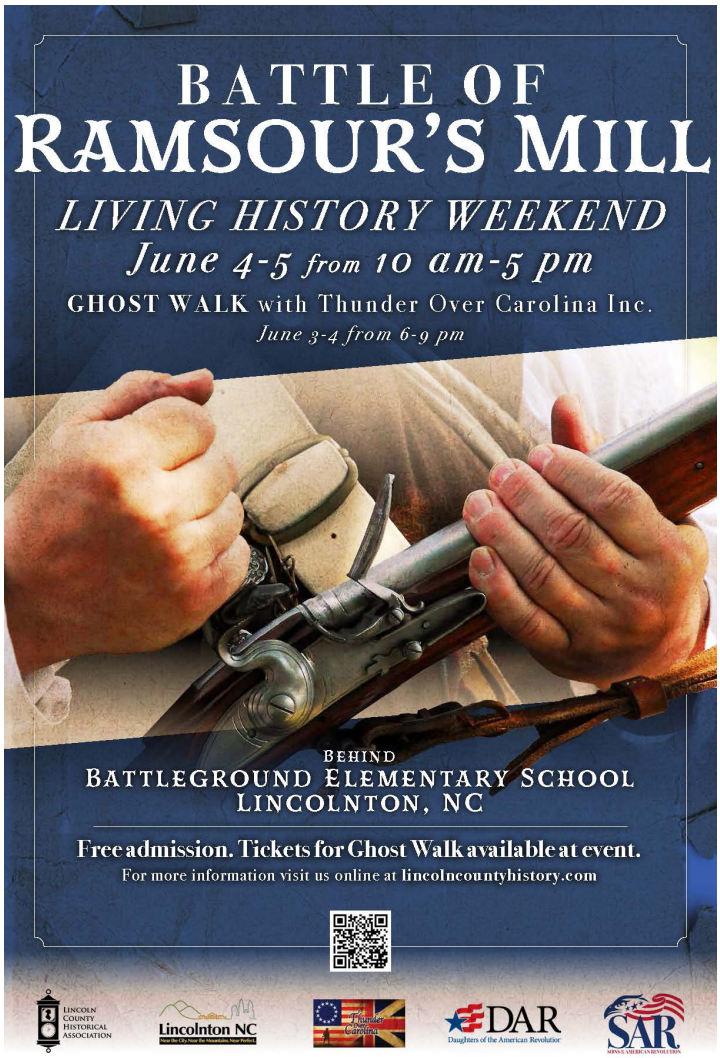
From T. Hogeboom

"Hi, I've just recently learned that I'm a descendent of Capt John Dobson, who was killed in the Battle of Ramsour's Mill. Apparently, he was my 5th great grandfather. Do you have any information about him? Was he fighting on the Loyalist side or with the Patriots? I'd be thrilled to learn more about him.

"My genealogical connection is as follows: his son John William Dobson, Sr. was my 4th great grandfather. His daughter Nancy Talitha Ann Dobson was my 3rd great grandmother. Nancy's son Lucius Drayton Smith was my 2nd great grandfather. Lucius's son Charles Buckley Smith was my great grandfather and Charles in turn fathered Finney Bascom Smith, my grandfather. Finney's daughter Leslie Cameron Smith was my mother.

Dobson was a Patriot killed at the Battle of Ramsour's Mill, and was buried near the place where he fell. The grave also contains the remains of his daughter Anne, and her husband, Wallace Alexander, who were buried beside him some years later. You are not the first family member who had inquired of him.

I'll be mailing a little booklet we give away on the Battle of Ramsour's Mill and hopefully you'll be able to visit Lincolnton one day and see for yourself.



Thank you, *Historian* Sponsors!

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As we continue publication of a third year of *The Historian*, we urge you to support us with one-year newsletter sponsorship of $100. Simply note on your donation that you'd like for your gift to be in support of the newsletter. We urge both individuals and businesses to be part of this outreach, which we distribute to members and to the public via the Lincoln County Library's Lincoln County Room.

Sponsorships help keep the presses running and provide complimentary subscriptions to Lincoln County educators. If you appreciate our newsletter, please consider becoming a sponsor.

Members of the LCHA spent a morning demonstrating basketry and basket weaving at North Brook Elementary's Heritage Days on April 13. In this photo, right foreground, Angie Horne shows the children how to construct the beginnings of a basket by weaving. In the blue shirt, back, Bill Beam explains how basket material is made from oak "splits" and can be used to make chair bottoms. Laura Gregory, brown sweater, demonstrated the many types of baskets and how the skill of weaving can be used to create both useful and artistic items. Photo by Chris Boyles.

LCHA Updates

Lincoln County Catawba Valley Pottery Market July 8 & 9

Please plan to join us on July 8 and 9 for our first Catawba Valley Pottery Market to benefit the LCHA.

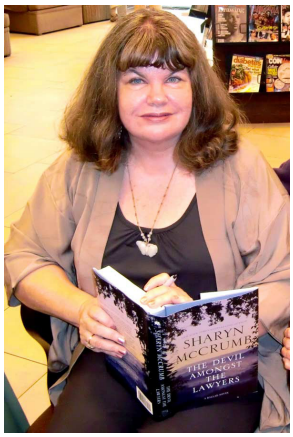
The festivities begin with a premier sale for VIPs and sponsors on Friday, July 8 with great food and music.

Then from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. on Saturday, July 9, come and enjoy the best of traditional Catawba Valley Pottery, face jugs, and much more presented for sale by collectors, traders, and artisans.

Tickets will be available online and at the door. More information coming soon.

LCHA Will Welcome Author Sharyn McCrumb in November

Book clubs and bibliophiles! If you love historical fiction, get ready to meet and greet award-winning Southern writer Sharyn McCrumb this November!



McCrumb is best known for her Appalachian "Ballad" novels, including the NY Times best sellers *The Ballad of Tom Dooley*, *The Ballad of Frankie Silver*, and *Ghost Riders*. Other titles include *King's Mountain*, *The Songcatcher*, *The Rosewood Casket*, and *The Devil Amongst the Lawyers*.

Her current novels are *Prayers the Devil Answers*, the story of the last public hanging ever carried out in the United States, and *The Unquiet Grave*, the story of West Virginia's Greenbriar Ghost.

Currently available, the new edition of the New York Times Bestseller *She Walks These Hills* with the essay "The Serpentine Chain," which discusses the ties between the culture of Appalachia and Britain.

If your book club is looking for summer reading material, here's your answer. McCrumb will be our guest on November 12, so you have plenty of time to visit the library and get ready to see her in person. More details coming.

Recent Accessions

2022.007: Additions to Sonoco Research Libary: *Scoundrels, Rogues, and Heroes of the Old North State* by Dr. H.G. Jones; and *Hidden History of the Western North Carolina Mountains* by Alice Sink. Donor: Bill and Sandra Stark

2022.002: Cannonball believed to have been pulled from Clark's Creek. Purchase

2022.009: "Saga of the Ferguson: If Britain had replaced the famous Brown Bess with the Ferguson Breechloader, we might still be a colony" article by Louis W. Steinwedel, Guns Magazine, February 1968. Found in Collection

2022.010: Handwritten family record, births and deaths of Houser Family 1817-1867. Found in Collection

2022.0011: Seven letters written to a cousin Miss Mattie Wilson of Clover, SC, from F.H. Weissinger in Santa Barbara, Sao Paulo, early 1900s. Found in Collection

2022.014: Family photos of the Charlie and Florence Caudle family. Donor: Cathy Caudle Moore

2022.015: *Good Food, Good Times* collection of recipes, canning and cooking tips, plus ancecdotes from the Drum-Wilkinson Clan. Donor: Charles Poovey

2022.016: UNC Chapel Hill Yackety-Yack yearbooks 1924-1927 belonging to Harlan Heafner. Donor: Carolyn Heavner Williams

2022.019: Lincolnton Jaycee's Miss Lincoln County Pageant programs, 1971 and 1973. Donor: Reginald Deal

2022.021: First edition of the Lincoln County Post published by her father, Johnny Mack Turner. Donor: Cynthia Turner Smith.

2022.022: Memorabilia and signage from Alda Crow home and business. Donor: John Crow

New and Renewed Memberships

Kathryn Birke
Margaret Birke
Matt & Neal Boles
Edward Boyles
Doug Bynum
George & Barbara Clark
Cathy & Anthony Davis
Janet Duckworth
Marty & Jill Eaddy
Shelly Early
Allen & Julie Elomaa
Wilson Ferrell
Angela Horne
John Hurt
Elsie Keever
Debra Lail

Upcoming Events

June 3 & 4	Ghost Walk led by members of the Thunder Over Carolina, Inc. cast. 6 - 9 p.m. Tickets are $10 and available at the Battleground site. Children 6 and under free.
June 4 & 5	Battle of Ramsour's Mill Living History Weekend at Battleground Park near Lincolnton High School and Battleground Elementary School. Reenactments, demonstrations, battlefield tours, encampment, hearth cooking, 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Sunday.
June 4	Wreathlaying Ceremony at the Mass Grave, 10 a.m. by the Sons of the American Revolution and Daughters of the American Revolution. Speaker will be historical scholar Steven Knapp of Starkville, Mississippi,
June 4	Battle of Ramsour's Mill Keynote speaker Andrew Waters, author of *The End of the World: Nathanael Greene, Charles Cornwallis, and the Race to the Dan.* 1 p.m. in the dining tent. Free.
June 23 - 25	Thunder Over Carolina outdoor drama, Woodmill Winery Ampitheater. Ticket information coming soon.
June 30	LCHA Day at Goodwood Pizzeria. 10% of proceeds to the Historical Association. Eat pizza, be happy, support the Historical Association!
July 8 & 9	Lincoln County Catawba Valley Pottery Market, Lincoln Citizen's Center. VIP preview Friday night with food and music; public sales from 9 until 6 on Saturday. Ticket sales and details coming soon.

Victoria Lawing
Marie Michael
Georgia Moffitt
Mike Peters
Bo & Jane Schronce
Victor & Jean Searfoss
Frances Sigmon
Rosalind Welder
James Wood
William Wood

Thank you, Donors!

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John Hurt
Debra Lail in memory of Lynn & Evelyn Steele
Victoria Lawing
Mike Peters
Martha Rudisill for the Plonk Family Cemetery Fund
Robert Thornton for the Plonk Family Cemetery Fund
Rosalind Welder in memory of Julia Beam Nail
James Wood in memory of Burton Hudson Wood and in honor of Pvt. Perry G. Wood, Co. 1, 11th NC Regt. CSA
William Wood in memory of Bill & Laura Wood

Recent Searches

- Images of General Robert F. Hoke
- Information on the history of North State Hotel
- Information on the Kistler Family
- Information on Peter and Catherine Totorow Young.
- Information on St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church
- Affidavits of Valentine Lohr
- Information on the Young/Tutherow family
- Information on Johannes Georg Lutz (1706-1756)

Our extensive Research Room and Library are currently open on Thursdays from 1 until 5 and Saturdays from 10 until 4. Other hours by appointment.

For Everything There is a Season – continued from page 1

death of Rev. Arends in 1807, Dr. Hunter was appointed the first supply for the Presbyterian Church in Lincolnton. After the death of Rev. Loretz in 1812, Dr. Hunter served as the pastor for the congregation and did so for several years in the "Dutch Meeting House" as it was called.

In the fall of 1815, the Concord Presbytery received a petition from Dr. Hunter and the congregation in Lincolnton requesting that it be received into the Presbytery. As a result, September 5, 1815, is recognized as the official organization date of the Presbyterian church in Lincolnton.

Meanwhile, the meeting house, which was expanded and weatherboarded in 1819, could seat 250 gatherers. Painted white, it became affectionately known as "The Old White Church."

While continuing to worship in the Old White Church, the congregation began planning for a building of their own on a section of Lot #19 on the southwest Court Square. According to Barefoot, as the brick structure was nearing completion in 1839, the church petitioned the Morganton Presbytery to change the name from Emanuels to Lincolnton Presbyterian Church.

The new church, built at a cost of $1800, featured clear glass windows with blinds, upholstered pews, an elevated pulpit, an organ, and a second-story gallery.

This brick building, enhanced by a covering of English ivy, would see the congregation through many tumultuous years, particularly the time of the Civil War.

"As the war raged on for four arduous years, the congregation of our church was depleted of almost every male member who was fit and able for military duty," writes Barefoot. "Many of these men never returned home."

By 1889, the congregation was outgrowing its quarters, and building plans were soon in progress. Church trustees were directed to select a new site, which was to become the flower garden of Colonel Phifer at the corner of West Main and Government Streets, the location of the present building. Construction began almost immediately.

The 1891 building was red brick in a Gothic design with a single tower designed to seat 100 people. Barely 25 years later, the congregation had outgrown the sanctuary and were in dire need of Sunday School space. In 1916 the church was once again looking to build.

Demolition on the old church began in summer of 1917, with young men of the congregation cleaning off the old bricks to be used for the new building using some of same bricks had also been used in the 1839 Water Street church. Several of the arched window frames from the 1891 church were used in the new building, and the large Phifer memorial window and the circular T.H. Hoke window were salvaged as well.

Duke Peeler Collection

Barefoot writes that the building was constructed on the exact site of the old church, the new building was designed to meet the nee growing congregation. It was built on the "Akron Plan," a church design popular at the time. The sanctuary was designed to seat approximately 250 people. A movable partition separated a small chapel from the main sanctuary which could be used to increase seating to 300. Surrounding the assembly room were Sunday school room, a kitchen, and central heating. It was completed at a cost of $25,000.

It was during this time that the church adopted its new name, First Presbyterian Church. By 1921, membership was 262, and Sunday School enrollment was 257.

By 1952, the educational facilities began to be overtaxed. Church member James A. Abernethy had already donated the land between the existing building and Sycamore street, so the church built an educational building/fellowship hall that featured a stage and kitchen facilities.

In January 2020, however, this seemingly defatigable congregation closed its doors, and the building was put up for sale by Preservation North Carolina at a pricetag of $700,000.

As for new beginnings, the new owner, Byron Sackett of Homesteads Events, says that the church and grounds will be transformed into a full-service event center that he is calling Homesteads Events on Main. The sanctuary, buildings, and garden will be available for weddings, class reunions, corporate gatherings, and other community events.

Sackett says that the first steps toward rebirth of this historical icon has been to repair and reseal the damaged wood around the stained-glass windows, re-

Author Andrew Waters Keynote Speaker on June 4th

The LCHA is proud and excited to announce that author Andrew Waters will be our keynote speaker at a Battle of Ramsour's Mill Weekend event on Saturday, June 4 at 1 p.m..

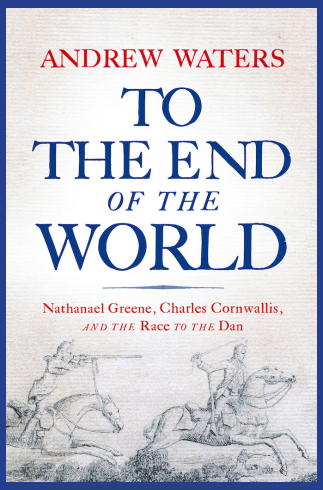
Waters will discuss his latest book, *To the End of the World: Nathanael Greene, Charles Cornwallis, and the Race to the Dan*, describes what is a little-known footnote of the American Revolution; an American General stranded alone, evading British patrols, while a British general burns clean his psychological dispair (at Ramsour's Mill).

His book tells the story of the epic confrontation between Nathanael Greene and Charles, Lord Cornwallis, during the winter of 1780-81.

Andrew Waters is a writer, editor, and conservationist residing in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Besides *To the End of the World* (Westholme Publishing, October 2020), he has written *The Quaker and the Gamecock: Nathanael Greene, Thomas Sumter, and the Revolutionary War for the Soul of the South* (Casemate Publishers, September 2019) and the editor of *Battle of Cowpens: Contemporary & Primary Accounts* (Regiment Press, June 2019).

Waters will have books available to purchase and autograph.

"In this situation...in the most barren inhospitable unhealthy part of North America, opposed by the most savage, inveterate perfidious cruel Enemy, with zeal and with Bayonets only, it was resolv'd to follow Green's Army, to the end of the World."
– British General Charles O'Hara
"Letters of Charles O'Hara to the duke of Grafton"



In the American Revolution, England's "Southern Strategy" rested on controlling the region's vast natural resources and rallying her Loyalist population to force the American rebels into a decisive conflict. Standing in her way only was Nathanael Greene's starving, threadbare Southern Army.

But in a decision referred to "as the most audacious and ingenious piece of military strategy of the war," Greene split his troops, forcing Cornwallis to revise his invasion plans. With the talented Virginia Continental Daniel Morgan now harassing his western flank, Cornwallis dispatched against Morgan his most ruthless officer, Banastre Tarleton. At Cowpens, on January 17, 1781, Morgan used a superior psychological understanding of backcountry tactics to set an ingenious trap, a "compleat victory" forming "a very principal link in the chain of circumstances which led to the independence of America."

painting, and giving TLC to some overlooked areas. He intends to spend money to improve the playground and garden, adding lighting for garden weddings. The plan is to have the garden ready by early summer.

The long-term plan is to update the kitchen and fix up the fellowship hall, opening up more meeting and catering space, says Sackett, who owns Homesteads Events at Loray Mill in Gastonia and operates the Park Expo Center in Charlotte. He said another long-term plan is to provide party rentals from the site, tables, chairs, linens, etc. which isn't a service immediately available in Lincolnton.

Sackett, who says that a personal experience with a church in his hometown of Homestead, Florida, made preserving the church important to him. "I'm glad I have the opportunity to save this church," he says, "and we're looking forward to be able to show it off to the public with a ribbon cutting by early fall."

– Carole Howell

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Current office hours are 1 until 5 on Thursdays and 10 until 4 on Saturdays with other hours by appointment. For the fastest response, please contact us by email,

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There's more to learn. Find The **Lincoln County Historical Association** on Facebook, or online at **lincolncountyhistory.com**

Lincoln County Historical Association

Join us Today

Please join us in our mission to research, record, document, and promote the history of Lincolnton and Lincoln County. All members and contributors receive our bi-monthly newsletter as well as advance notice and invitations to special exhibits and events.

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