

GARNER AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 6, Number 1 – March, 2024

Our mission: Preserving the history of Garner and nearby crossroads, educating youth and promoting Garner's story in and outside of the community.



First Quarter in Review

◆ In January, the Garner History Museum at the Depot hosted a tour for a group of students and teachers who produce the “Garner Chronicles” podcast. The students and their teachers represented South Garner High School, East Garner Middle School and Vandora Springs Elementary School. We are excited to know such a great group of students who are interested in Garner’s past, present, and future!

◆ Black History Month in February was recognized with a special display of artifacts from Garner Colored High School (later Garner Consolidated School) which were provided by alumna Eunice Avery. The Museum also screened the video recording of “68,” the play by Garner native Tim Stevens about the merging of the black Garner Consolidated and white Garner High Schools into a brand new, desegregated campus. We also screened an interesting panel discussion hosted by the North Carolina Museum of History on the making of the PBS-NC documentary on Rosenwald Schools.

◆ In March, GAHS collaborated with Southeast Regional Library on a great presentation for Women’s History Month. Judy Bass worked with the library staff on compiling information about several Garner women, past and present, who have shaped our community. The SERL staff created an outstanding exhibit of these notable women. You are sure to recognize the women featured.



“Garner’s Notable Women” display featured in March at Southeast Regional Library.

GAHS Welcomes New Board Members

At its January meeting, the Garner Area Historical Society Board appointed three new individuals to the Board of Directors. All are community members who share a passion for history and dedication to Garner.

Connie Barton has been a Museum volunteer for several years. Retired from state government, Connie has been very active in the local DAR chapter and with Boy Scouts of America. Connie is an avid genealogist, and has expertise to help visitors with their genealogy questions.

Mary Smalling is the owner of the Banks Bed & Breakfast, and she and husband Curtis were responsible for saving and restoring this gorgeous, historic Garner home. Mary is a retired educator, member of the Downtown Garner Association Board, and has expertise in historic preservation.

Garner native Tim Stevens is well-known as an award-winning sports writer for the News and Observer and for the many historical dramas he has written and produced, as well as his dedication to Garner-area veterans.

We welcome these new members to the Board of the Garner Area Historical Society and appreciate their interest in preserving and sharing Garner's history.

Events and Activities Coming Up

Please be on the lookout for details on these events planned for later this year. We will post information on our website and Google page, as well as on Facebook. If you'd like to volunteer to help, we'd love to have you. (These activities are in addition to several planned tours that the Museum will be hosting.)

April: We will have a Museum display celebrating the Chartering of the Town of Garner and memorabilia from the 100th Anniversary Celebration. The General GAHS Membership Meeting will be on Sunday, April 28th.

May: We will present an exhibit for Memorial Day featuring memorabilia from the Vietnam Wall, and screen locally produced films relating to veterans. May is also Historic Preservation Month.

June: There will be a Tea at Banks Bed & Breakfast on June 23rd (ticketed event.)

September: Our second annual "Voices of the Past" event will be held at New Bethel Baptist Church.

In addition to these events, look for GAHS at several Downtown Garner events and at the Annual Garner Firemen's Day celebration in October. If you would like to volunteer to help with any of these events just send us an email and we will get back to you with details.



Next Big Goal: Restoring Our Caboose

Now that our Museum has become established, restoration of our circa 1951 caboose is foremost among our goals as an organization. Our little red caboose has become quite a landmark in the historic area of downtown Garner, drawing much attention and also attracting visitors to the Museum. We get questions on a regular basis about if and when it might be open for visitors. Our goal would be to restore the caboose to its authentic state as it appeared when it was a working railcar.

Officers of the GAHS Board have consulted with a well-known railroad historian as well as a craftsman who have worked together to complete restorations of railcars for other area historical organizations. We're ready to begin active fundraising toward this effort. Donors have contributed cash at the Museum as well as through our website, but it is time to begin serious, specific fundraising. There are some grant funds available, but those would only cover a portion of the restoration costs. Our need is to raise at least \$15,000. Please spread the word, and let's get our caboose restored!

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