

A complimentary copy of this newsletter has been sent to you if you are not currently a member of the Chapel Hill Historical Society.

We invite you to join the CHHS. Membership fees support the organization's mission and activities and entitle you to newsletters and invitations to the Society's upcoming programs as described in this bulletin.

Please send your check to: Chapel Hill Historical Society, P.O. Box 9032 Chapel Hill, NC 27515-9032

## Your Next Newsletter

The Society's fall newsletter will be issued jointly with the Preservation Society of Chapel Hill and the Chapel Hill Museum. The decision to try a combined newsletter results from discussions of the Futures Committee, a group commissioned by the three organizations to think strategically about our individual and collective activities. The newsletter will contain one calendar showing all the activities of the three organizations for the fall season. The organizations are also studying options for a combined, state-of-the-art website. The goals of any joint action are to lower costs and increase services for our members and the greater Chapel Hill community.

You may join the Chapel Hill Historical Society at any of these levels:

Benefactor - \$5,000

Sponsor - \$1,000

Patron - \$250

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Couple/Individual - \$35

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## The Chapel Hill Historical Society

The Chapel Hill Historical Society  
Boundary Street  
Entrance at the Chapel Hill Museum  
PO Box 9032  
Chapel Hill, NC  
27515-9032  
Tel: 919.929.1793  
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## The Chapel Hill Historical Society

*Making the Past Present*

Spring 2008 Newsletter

### SINGULAR OR PLURAL, OUR PASTS REMAIN ENGAGING

By Terry Barnett, President

Growing up, I heard the subject as "history", a singular noun as in "The History of America." But working years later in South Africa, I noted that one of the African National Congress leaders used the plural, "histories." His rationale, I understand, was that our individual narratives about the past are so different, and will continue to be so different, that it is more helpful to recognize that we are dealing with "The Histories of Africa" or "The Histories of Chapel Hill."

As it moves forward, a community may benefit by helping each individual recognize and articulate the history in his or her head, and become genuinely curious about the possibly-quite-different history in someone else's head. One may hope that these histories overlap more as time proceeds, but one also knows that our pasts will always remain plural.

During its 41 years, the Chapel Hill Historical Society has tried to illuminate the histories of different individuals, neighborhoods, groups, and ages in Chapel Hill—publishing books by slave and freemen, a series of calendars featuring photos of Chapel Hillians throughout the ages, over 300 monthly programs of amazingly diverse subjects, grants to public school teachers of elementary through high school, more than 400 monthly newspaper historical columns on local subjects, historical plaques and citizen awards, fostering neighborhood history efforts, memorializing over 300 personal oral histories, and many other ventures. "Making The Past Present" has been our motto; but celebrating the richness of our many "Pasts" continues to be our passion and goal.

As you enjoy the capsules of our spring programs, and the peek ahead to the summer and fall, we hope that you will be inspired to join us in rediscovering your town and neighbors

The Chapel Hill  
Historical Society  
2007-08  
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Nancy Tannenbaum, Secretary  
Carolyn Sturgess, Treasurer

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CHHS Board Members at "An Evening with Bland Simpson"  
Terry Barnett, President,  
with Eleanor Morris  
and Mary Webb,  
co-chairs of the Evening.  
Photo by Steven Petrow.

MARVELOUS MONTHLY  
CLASSIC MOVIE  
NIGHTS...



## Death of a Salesman

Friday, May 16th, 7pm

Winner of stage and movie awards too numerous to mention, Arthur Miller's travelling American salesman, Willie Loman, has been played by a succession of great stars. UNC and Playmaker's Ray Dooley will lead a pre-movie conversation about the history of this classic, with clips of versions not seen in full at 6pm.

## Laura

Friday, July 18th, 7pm

Described as "one of the most stylish, elegant, moody, and witty classic *film noirs* ever made," this 1944 film opens with, "I shall never forget the weekend Laura died." Starring Gene Tierney and Dana Andrews, *Laura* won the Oscar for best Black-and-White Cinematography, and the theme song became one of the first title songs to become a popular hit. Introduced by our own Harriet and Kimball King at 6pm.

## Sunset Boulevard

Friday, August 22, 7pm

Produced by Charles Brackett, directed by Billy Wilder, written by Brackett and Wilder, it has one of the great opening scenes in film, a man floating face down in the swimming pool of a lavish Hollywood mansion — the mansion to which Norma Desmond/Gloria Swanson has retreated, secure in her memories, and into which William Holden, a struggling screenwriter stumbles when he turns off Sunset Boulevard, into the driveway, in an effort to avoid repossession of his car. Introduction by Jim Moore, grandson of the producer and co-writer Charles Brackett, at 6:00pm.

## 1776

Friday, September 5th, 7pm

We launch our fall campaign season by returning to our nation's founding and its struggles against England and King George. Introduction and pre-movie conversation led by Dave Cupp at 6pm.

To make reservations, call The Carolina Club  
962-1101 - and indicate you are a member of  
the Chapel Hill Historical Society.

## AND MORE COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES...

### At UNC's Wilson Library...

The North Carolina Collection Gallery  
Current Exhibition: *Lines of Humor,  
Shades of Controversy: A Century of  
Student Cartooning at UNC.*

February 14, - May 31, 2008. Monday -  
Friday 9am - 5pm, Saturday 9am - 1pm,  
and Sunday 1pm - 5pm .

### At the Preservation Society of Chapel Hill...

Bring your lunch to the Preservation Society  
of Chapel Hill and enjoy a lunchtime  
lecture! Each monthly talk begins at 12  
noon in the Horace Williams House. The  
Horace Williams House is located at 610  
E. Rosemary Street. For more information  
call (919) 942-7818 or [chpreservation@  
mindspring.com](mailto:chpreservation@mindspring.com).

May 21st

"Chapel Hill's Slave Poet: George Moses  
Horton" - Marjorie Hudson

June 18th

"A Fountain of Old Wells: The Role of  
Temples in the Garden" - Sarah Madry

July 16th

"The History and Future of Bolin Creek"  
- Dave Otto, Friends of Bolin Creek

### From CHHS Newsletter

September 1972: "An option to purchase the [Betty Smith] property was obtained from the heirs and at a [CHHS] Board of Directors meeting August 22<sup>nd</sup>, it was voted unanimously to request an extension of the option until December 1. In the meantime, plans were set in motion to create a Chapel Hill Preservation Fund for the purchase and preservation of historic buildings and sites of this nature. Plans for the Fund, which would be of a revolving nature, were worked out by a committee headed by Mrs. William Friday and Mrs. Kay Kyser..."

## A PARTIAL PEEK AT OUR SUMMER & FALL

We've had a wonderful year at the Society. As always, our work is focused on making the past present, and we hope that you enjoyed our programs and newsletters.

Peeking at next year, we are looking forward to bringing a number of interesting programs to the community. Read ahead...

### Board Retreat

Building on our May General Membership meeting, our old and new Board will have a combined retreat on Wednesday, June 18, from 4-8 to plan our coming year. We welcome comments and suggestions from all members in advance of our retreat.

### Saluting Our Elders

On Thursday, October 2, we will salute a dozen of our community's "Town Treasures"—individuals who have enhanced the quality of life in Chapel Hill. At a reception at the Chapel Hill Museum, we will unveil documentary-style photos of the Treasures, by Catharine Carter, in settings that reflect their contributions to the community. Stories will also capture their words and spirit.

### Town, Gown and Altar: The History of Faith Congregations in Chapel Hill

On Sunday, October 26, we will hold the first of a series of programs on the history of faith communities in Chapel Hill. Our initial afternoon, in UNC's historic Gerard Hall, will focus on the period surrounding the founding of the University—the arrival of Presbyterian-trained professors, the requirement for attending religious service, and the faith meetings in the town. Subsequent programs in 2009 will highlight events in the 19<sup>th</sup> century—the founding of the mainstream churches along East Franklin Street and the formation of the African-American congregations. This series will continue into 2010.

### The Great Outdoors

Building on our successful program in January 2008, on the mills and dams of Orange County, we will continue to explore the history of our Outside Environment. Look forward to learning more about your un-walled environs.

As we move forward in these endeavors, we would welcome the knowledge and wisdom of our members and other community residents. Call us at 929-1793.

## Book Reports

The Chapel Hill Historical Society maintains in its office a collection of books about Chapel Hill, the University, and North Carolina. Members may make arrangements to browse through the books at times the office is open. Call 929-1793 for information.

Several books have recently been added to the collection. Bill and Virginia Powell have donated a copy of the *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, edited by William S. Powell and published in 2006 by the University of North Carolina Press. This comprehensive volume with more than 2,000 entries is a valuable research tool for those studying North Carolina history. Also, Virginia Powell secured for the office a *Directory and Inventory of the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery*, which identifies those buried in the cemetery by name, family, lot, year of birth, and year of death. Information from this notebook would be an interesting guide for a walk through the Chapel Hill cemetery. Catherine Berryhill Williams has given the Society a copy of *Bettering the Health of the People*, by William W. McLendon, Floyd W. Denny, Jr. and William B. Blythe, published in 2007 by the UNC Press. The book tells the story of W. Reece Berryhill, the UNC School of Medicine, and the North Carolina Good Health Movement.



— RECAPS —  
January & February CHHS Sunday Programs

### The History of Chapel Hill and Carrboro Mills

Carrboro mayor Mark Chilton and Pittsboro architect Grimsley Hobbs presented January's program on the mills of the Haw River basin. Mark is an amateur historian, and is writing on a history of area mills, which numbered over 300 on the Haw River alone during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Mark discussed the background of the economics and history of some of the area's private and commercial mills. Grimsley's late father Grimsley T. Hobbs was past president of Guilford College and the author of a book, "Exploring the Old Mills of North Carolina," and his family has been restoring grist mills since the 1950's. He resides at the Baldwin Mill in Chatham County on Terrell's Creek, near Chicken Bridge, which the Hobbs family has owned since the 1940's. The mill is on the National Register of Historic Places. A series of slides showed photographs and locations of many of the still-visible ruins of old grist mills in the immediate Chapel Hill & Carrboro area along Bolin Creek and Morgan Creek.

### UNC Medicine –The Evolution of UNC Hospitals and Medical Education

Our good friend and CHHS member Bill McLendon was on hand in February to present a program on the history of medical education in the state of North Carolina and on the genesis and evolution of UNC Hospitals. UNC occupies a unique position among institutions involved in the interdisciplinary teaching of medicine, public health, dentistry and nursing, and Bill's recent book on founding dean W. Reece Berryhill revealed much of the historic background behind the series of events which led to Good Health Movement in North Carolina during the 1940's and 1950's. Bill also provided us with a wonderful slide presentation to accompany his lively lecture, and featured an early recording of Frank Sinatra, who was commissioned to sing "It's All Up To You" as part of the early promotional effort to improve the health of North Carolina citizens.

## NOMINATIONS FOR CHHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rosemary Waldorf, Chair of our Nominating Committee, will offer the following slate of nominees at our General Membership Meeting: President, Terry Barnett; Vice President, Eleanor Morris; Secretary, Nancy Tannenbaum; Treasurer, Mitch Virchik; Board Members: Lynden Harris, Linda

Jacobson, Moreton Neal, Laurie Paolicelli, Sandy Roberts, Mary Frances Volger, Mary Webb. Special thanks to outgoing Board members Kathie Heffner, John Hawkins, Vicki Threlfall, and Tim West for their many contributions to the Society and Chapel Hill.

### From Books Published by the CHHS

*The Campus at Chapel Hill: Two Hundred Years of Architecture.* By John V. Allcott, 1986 — "As the intended home for youths in training to become good citizens, learned men, and statesmen, Chapel Hill was a mentally "healthy" spot, well out of sight and sound of squabbling lawyers and politicians...."

*Bill Prouty's Chapel Hill*, a collection of 44 newspaper columns written by Bill Prouty, 1954-78. — "How many better feelings have you ever had than to walk around barefooted in nice, shade-cooled, fine grain dust? I can remember plopping one foot after another plumb out of sight from home in the dust on Franklin Street, leaving in my wake little dust dimples ringed by the flopping seams of overall pants legs."

## CALLING ALL MEMBERS

The Historical Society's annual general membership meeting will be held on Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, from 3-5 pm in our Society's headquarters. We have much to enjoy.

We will hear from last year's winner of our of \$2,500 grant to foster history education in our schools. Chapel Hill High teacher Bill Melaga and his students will report on their efforts to link Chapel Hill and the events at Pearl Harbor on that "Day of Infamy". As reviewed widely in publications including *The News* and *Oberserver* and in *The Chapel Hill News*, Bill makes history come alive for his students, and he promises to do so for us as well.

We will announce the winners of our annual Mary Arthur Stoudemire award for individuals who make outstanding contributions to historical preservation in Chapel Hill. Also, we are launching a new award

to recognize individuals who have contributed significantly to documenting the history of Chapel Hill and its environs. We are honored to be able to pay tribute to those individuals who have kept alive our past foibles, fables, and favorable feats.

During the meeting, our general membership will elect new members to the Society's Board of Directors and select its officers for the coming year. We will review our programs for the past year and look ahead to the line-up for the coming year. A door prize, made possible by the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors' Bureau, will delight UNC sports fans. And we will have refreshments, good cheer, and possibly some frightfully-intellectual conversation.

See ya!

## CHHS HISTORICAL NOTES IN THE CHAPEL HILL NEWS

On the third Sunday of each month, *The Chapel Hill News* prints "Historical Notes", columns prepared by members of the CHHS. Here are excerpts from this spring's columns:

January 20: "It was just one month more than seven years ago that my first Historical Notes column was published in *The Chapel Hill News*. ... It's been such a sparkling seven years..." From "**How Sweet the Notes Have Been!**" by Doug Eyre.

February 18: "Imagine Franklin Street in the 1890s... When it was hot and dusty there were sprinklers — big water tanks pulled by horses. When the street was ravaged by rain and sleet there were scrapers, heavy blades on iron wheels pulled by a four-horse team that smoothed the surface for the brisk parade of wagons and carriages making their way through Chapel Hill. This was the way James Nunn saw it as a boy of 10 when he and his brother Massy walked five miles into town to sell eggs and chickens. His reminiscences of Chapel Hill..." From "**The**

**Days of Ash Cakes and Locust Beer**", by Harriet King.

March 16: "On the evening of December 18, 1947, the University Service Plants caught fire...As I recall the event, several hundred students milled around the site and began chanting 'Our town is red hot. BEAT DUKE!' As the blaze was extinguished, students returned to their residences. I had never seen such excitement..." From "**Basketball Flavors Franklin Street Celebrations**" by Sam Magill.

April 20: "The well is iconic, the bell is melodious, the stone walls are lovely, the October nights are glorious, but *The Rathskeller*...oh, *The Rat* was delicious.... A favorite pastime while dining at *The Rat* was reading the more than half-century of graffiti. Names, dates, drawings and all sorts of markings were scratched, gouged, drawn and painted on the booths, walls, and practically every bare spot in *The Rat*..." From "**The 'Rat' was University Tradition and Landmark**" by Jason Tomberlin.

# An Evening With **Bland Simpson & His Music**

## Spring Fundraiser Nets \$10,000

Bland Simpson, the Director of UNC's Creative Writing Program and member of the Red Clay Ramblers, provided a wonderful evening of fellowship, music, stories, and history to a group of approximately 150 gathered at the Carolina Inn's Hill Ballroom for our annual fundraiser.

Society Vice President, Eleanor Morris, noted in her introductory remarks, that Bland is a marvelous combination of Renaissance Man and Good Old Boy – resulting in an enlightened Good Old Boy — qualities that in him are a perfect mix. As a Renaissance Man, Bland excels in a wide variety of fields – with a depth of talent, an appreciation of history, and a broad base of knowledge. And as an enlightened Good Old Boy, Bland is relaxed and possesses a strong

sense of place and a firm loyalty to family and friends.

Bland and his family have been in Chapel Hill for four generations. He recounted stories about his grandfather, who was responsible for the construction of many buildings on the old UNC campus. And today, he and his wife Ann have three children – twins who graduated from UNC in 2007 and a daughter in high school — as well as extended family living in the area.

Special thanks are due to current and former CHHS Board Members who worked tirelessly to bring us this special evening of music and Chapel Hill lore.



*Doug Eyre promises Bland Simpson the very first copy of Doug's forthcoming book, a collection of 101 historical columns, to be published soon by the Chapel Hill Historical Society.*  
Photo by Steven Petrou.

## ♪ ♪ Thank You Notes ♪ ♪

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### Raffle Prizes

Mary and Woody Webb ..... Week at oceanfront condominium  
The Umstead Hotel and Spa ..... Weekend for two  
Fine Feathers ..... Gift Certificate  
Farrington House Country Inn ..... Overnight for two with afternoon tea & breakfast  
The Franklin Hotel ..... Overnight for two with breakfast  
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The Trail Shop ..... Outfitted back pack

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Proceeds from An Evening With Bland Simpson and His Music will benefit the Chapel Hill Historical Society.