

New to the LCHA:

January Porter



January Porter is a graduate of Appalachian State University, and received a BA in Anthropology, with a concentration in archaeology in 1999. Currently, Ms. Porter is working on her MA in Archaeology and Heritage through the distance learning program at the University of Leicester in England. She began working in the discipline of archaeology at the age of 12, and has acquired an array of experience working with museum collections. Her recent research interests include backcountry studies, with particular focus on rural and urban socioeconomic comparisons. In addition, she is interested in delineating and defining past Native American interaction throughout the Catawba Valley region. January is also very involved with Gaston County, and is a board advisor to the Gaston County Historic Preservation Commission. She recently received a Preservation Services Fund grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation being used for restoration efforts at the Hoyle Historic Homestead in Dallas, NC. Prior to joining the Lincoln County Museum of History, January was a contract employee for the Schiele Museum of Natural History. Her recent projects include the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport Runway expansion project, the Sugar Creek Cemetery survey, and the Ramsour's Mill Battlefield Mass Grave survey.

January is originally from Gastonia, NC and currently resides in Belmont, NC with her husband and two children.

Welcome to the LCHA's new digital newsletter. We are very pleased to provide our members and contributors with the opportunity to read articles on various aspects of Lincolnton and Lincoln County's rich history, in addition to short pieces on our most recent acquisitions, programs, projects, and special events. This new format expands our ability to reach our audience, as well as meet the growing needs of a global market in the digital age.

As you peruse our upcoming issues, please make us aware of any articles that you would like to see in print, as we will be printing a small number of the newsletters for our members that do not currently have email or access to the internet. As always, we are very interested in meeting the history and preservation-related needs of our ever-growing membership, and achieving our mission of collecting, preserving, and presenting the history of Lincolnton and Lincoln County, North Carolina.

LCHA Executive Director
Jason L. Harpe



Bridging the Gap: Historic Mariposa Bridge



The Mariposa bridge photographed during the 1970s.

Photographs courtesy of Fred and Linda Gardner Kirby, and Arthur McGinnis.

Historic resources throughout the world hold memories for individuals and families who lived, worked, and played within their boundaries, and at these locations locals captured cherished images of people and groups with these resources providing invaluable backdrops and settings. For these folks, these historic resources served as landmarks that made indelible marks on the fabric of their families, communities, and culture. These landmarks range from historic barns, smokehouses, and vernacular gems of rural landscapes to opulent Victorian-era residences situated among contiguous structures in cities. Although many historic resources are lost each year to teardowns, or are compromised by architecturally incongruous additions or inappropriate renovations, outstanding examples of

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LCHA Announcements

The Lincoln Sentinel, e-newsletter of the LCHA and Lincoln County Museum of History, is published four times per year for the members of the organization. The newsletter includes information on the most recent acquisitions, programs, projects, news, and articles on local historical topics.

The mission of the LCHA is to collect, preserve, study, and present the history of Lincolnton and Lincoln County from the time of its first inhabitants to the present through exhibitions, publications, programs, projects, and special events.

Bridging the Gap: Historic Mariposa Bridge - cont.



George and Notsie Hager Bollinger, both employees of the Mariposa Mill, are photographed in 1908 standing on a large flat rock near the site of the Mariposa Bridge on Leeper's Creek. The rock was a popular place for local folks to gather and pose for photographs during the time the mill was in operation.

Photograph courtesy of Geneva R. Lewis.

proper restoration and rehabilitation dot the landscapes of many small towns and big cities.

The Mariposa Bridge in southeastern Lincoln County is one of many historic resources in Lincoln County that has stood the test of time, as it avoided demolition when a more modern bridge was planned to provide a more sufficient means

of transportation across Leeper's Creek. For many people, this historic bridge not only served as a link between the Mariposa Mill and the adjoining mill village, it also served as a gathering place, especially on Sunday afternoons, for numerous families that include the Gardners, Grahams, Bollingers, Lawings, McGinnises, Parnells, Fishers, and many others. A large flat rock located in close proximity to the bridge served as a picturesque backdrop for photographs from the first decade of the twentieth century through the 1950s, in addition to serving as a suitable location for picnics and fellowship.

Vestiges of this bridge and the Mariposa Mill and village are found in the homes of men and women that remain in Lincoln County, and others that hung their shingles in other cities and states. Among these vestiges are photographs of families outside their homes in the mill village, groups beside the mill and on the bridge, and vintage images of the Craig Memorial Baptist Church, originally named Craig Chapel in honor the Craig family's donation of materials for its construction. This church served as the religious nucleus of the Mariposa community, and stood as a beacon atop Mariposa Hill overlooking Leeper's Creek, the Mariposa Bridge, and the Mariposa Mill. Other extant artifacts from the Mariposa community include time books from the Mariposa Mill owned by Ralph Nantz and David Saunders that document the names of mill overseers and other employees. According to the time books, men such as George Bollinger were paid

19 cents per hour in the early 1920s, but occasionally received five cents net pay after deductions for rent and charges at the company store. Judith McSwain's aunt, Lucy Bollinger, thirteen years old in 1922, is included on various yellowed pages from the mill time books as receiving twelve cents an hour at a time when children worked in textile mills throughout the South.

The Mariposa Bridge maintains local significance as the best example of a Pratt thru-truss bridge in Lincoln County, and is important for its associations with the development of transportation in Lincoln County. This one-lane, pin-connected Pratt truss bridge was built in 1912 by the Owego Bridge Company of Owego, New York, and is a complete and historically significant example of a common bridge type and design that was prevalent across the nation during the late nineteenth century. Many bridge companies marketed this highway bridge type and design in North Carolina during the period from the 1890s through the first decade of the twentieth century. According to a historic bridge inventory report conducted by Lichtenstein Consulting Engineers for the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the Mariposa Bridge's Pratt truss design was the most common truss design built in North Carolina and is identifiable by a simple web arrangement of diagonals in tension. This design afforded ease of design and fabrication, utilizing economical standard rolled angles and channel sections, plates, bars, rods, and I beams.

The Owego Bridge Company of Owego, New York



Employees of the Mariposa Mill pose for this photograph during the 1930s. They are, from left to right, as follows: (front row) Dwight Lawing, Jack Fisher, John "Puff" Long, and Mr. Porch; (back row) Clyde Gardner, Wilson Graham, Ralph Fisher, and Paul Jenkins.

Photograph courtesy of Sam Gardner, Jr.

Bridging the Gap: Historic Mariposa Bridge - cont.



Fred Riddle, John Lawing, Jack Fisher, Page Bollinger, and Dwight Lawing are shown leaning against the railing of the Mariposa bridge around 1943.

Photograph courtesy of Louise L. Bollinger.

was established during the early 1890s, and built truss highway bridges throughout the eastern United States during the first decade of the twentieth century. The company focused

most of its attention on New York and adjacent states, but did build bridges for states throughout the South before going out of business in 1917. Before 1900, Pratt truss bridges maintained and were restricted by patented details and proprietary requirements of specific bridge companies, but later examples, such as the one at Mariposa, had fewer restrictions and proprietary details and secured standard built-up sections and connections specifications.

Various groups have surveyed and reported on the Mariposa Bridge, and we are fortunate that their reports contribute to the Lincoln County Historical Association and Lincoln County Historic Properties Commission's efforts to preserve the Mariposa Bridge as an essential historic resource of our built environment. The Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) through the National Park Service's Heritage Documentation Program photographed and documented the bridge in 1979, and the State Historic Preservation Office deemed the bridge eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. A 1979 environmental report prepared when a new bridge bypassed the historic Mariposa Bridge specified the lack of contiguous historic resources. The remains of the Mariposa Mill are located more than 250 feet southeast of the bridge.

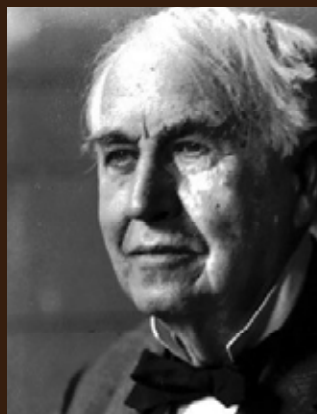
Thanks to the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Lincoln County Historical Association, the Lincoln County Historical Properties Commission currently holds ownership of this historic resource, and individuals such as Judith McSwain, Louise L. Bollinger, Geneva L. Lewis, Arthur McGinnis, Fred and Linda Gardner Kirby,

Betty Gardner Painter, and Sam Gardner, Jr. have

contributed the documentation on the bridge's local and statewide significance by contributing copies of photographs and primary resources to the Lincoln County Historical Association and Lincoln County Museum of History. Currently, staff of the Lincoln County Historical Association is completing the nomination to have the bridge added to the State's Study List of Historic Properties with plans to write a nomination to have the site added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Please contact Jason L. Harpe with any photographs, documents, or other primary materials that help document the history of the Mariposa Mill, village, or bridge. You can send this information to LCHA, 403 East Main Street, Lincolnton, North Carolina, 28092, lcmh@bellsouth.net, or call (704) 748-9090.

Please visit www.LincolnCountyHistory.com to learn more about the Lincoln County Historical Association and Lincoln County Historic Properties Commission. Special thanks to Judith McSwain for her assistance with securing photographs, documents, and oral histories on the Mariposa Mill, bridge, and mill village. Extra special thanks to David Saunders, Ralph Nantz, Louise L. Bollinger, Geneva R. Lewis, Arthur McGinnis, Jim McSwain, Fred and Linda Gardner Kirby, Betty Gardner Painter, Sam Gardner, Jr.



Did
You
Know

Thomas Edison visited Lincoln County in 1908 in search of cobalt and stayed in the North State Hotel in downtown Lincolnton.

The Richard A. Ramseur Photo Collection

Donated to the Lincoln County Historical Association by Richard "Rick" Ramseur, this incredible and vivid collection of negatives that date from the first and second decades of the twentieth century unveils some of Lincolnton and Lincoln County's most treasured local historic sites, and joins the William James Collection as the earliest documentary images of these sites in LCHA's collection. Included in this collection are never-before-seen images of the Lincolnton Graded School, East and West Main Street, the Reinhardt Building, dredging of Indian Creek, Tarleton's Tea Table and other historic resources at the Ramsour's Mill Revolutionary War battlesite, historic buildings and structures, and scenes of men working with threshing machines and other agricultural equipment throughout Lincoln County. The Richard A. Ramseur Photograph Collection will make up the core of the LCHA's collection of photographs and build our organization's ability to document this social, cultural, and economic history of Lincolnton and Lincoln County. LCHA staff has digitized the collection and is currently cataloging it in our PastPerfect collections software. LCHA is the very fortunate recipient of this collection, and extends extra special thanks to Richard and Myra Ramseur and Sue Ramseur for their donation.

Richard Alexis Ramseur (1883-1976) received his first camera 1902, the year he moved to Lenoir, North Carolina and worked for Barnhardt Furniture and at the local bank. Although he lived and worked in Lenoir until 1917, Richard revisited his hometown to capture photographs of buildings and social functions as early as 1910. Upon his return to Lincolnton in 1917, Richard worked for his father and served as co-owner at Ramseur Hardware in the 100 block on the southeastern side of East Main Street. He worked at Ramseur Hardware until his retirement in 1952, and he died in 1976. Photography was simply a hobby for Richard A. Ramseur.



East Main Street, 100 Block Northeast

This photograph of the 100 block on the northeast side of East Main Street showcases the facades and awnings of local business owners Moses George, Childs-Wolfe Drug Store, Leonards, C. Guy Rudisill and Brother Dry Goods and Clothing, and First National Bank.



Fassifern Miss Kate Shipp School

Miss Kate Cameron Shipp and her sister, Mrs. Anna C. McBee, established Fassifern Miss Kate Shipp's School in Lincolnton in 1907. Miss Shipp named the school after Fassifern Castle, the ancestral home of the Camerons in England. The two sisters ran the school until Mrs. McBee's death in 1923. In 1925, the demand for larger equipment prompted Miss Shipp to sell the school in Hendersonville to Reverend Joseph Sevier. The building was moved to Hendersonville, where a much larger student body found suitable accommodations.



Academy Street School

Since the early years of education in Lincoln County, schools of the highest regard, both private and public, have been established and conducted by instructors with the highest level of education and excellence. During the early years of the twentieth century, particularly the 1910s and 1920s, Lincolnton's public schools made great strides in advancing attendance and equipping their students with the academics to become successful and prosperous. Under the superintendency of Professor Wiley M. Pickens, enrollment in the town's four schools soared to around 1,500. The Academy Street Primary School (General Robert F. Hoke School) was built in 1914 and ranked third in the group with 233, behind Lincolnton High School (General Stephen Dodson Ramseur) with 511; and Grammar School (Kate C. Shipp School) with 438. Behind Academy Street were the Aspen Street School (General Robert D. Johnston School) with 93; and the colored schools with 214.



Lincolnton Graded School

The Lincolnton Graded School, designed by Reverend Robert A. Yoder (member of the Lincoln County School Board, pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, and first president of Lenoir-Rhyne College), was constructed in 1907-1908 at the corner of Congress and Academy Streets in Lincolnton. The building housed the entire Lincolnton school system until 1916. It later served as an elementary school, as part of Lincolnton High School, and in later years was commonly referred to as the Grammar School.

The Richard A. Ramseur Photo Collection



East Main Street, 100 Block Northeast

Richard Ramseur captured during the first decade of the twentieth-century a snapshot of the 100 block in Lincolnton's downtown commercial district as a combination of cars and horse-drawn carriages occupy available parking spaces. There were department stores, hardware stores, and other specialty stores. By 1910, there were two banks, two railroad depots, a post office, a high school, a hospital, and churches of all major denominations. For persons needing their services, there was a good supply of lawyers and doctors. Two newspapers were published weekly, and there was a host of boardinghouses and two full-service hotels.



East Main Street, 200 Block

Carolina Garage and Texaco Gasoline and Filling Station signs dominate the right of this photograph of the 200 block of East Main Street in downtown Lincolnton. Prominent in this photograph are the wooden boards covering the bridge over the C & NW railroad tracks, the Lincoln County Courthouse, North State hotel, early twentieth century cars and large oak trees lining East Main Street.

The Richard A. Ramseur Photo Collection



Tarleton's Tea Table

Tarleton's Tea Table served as an historically accurate and appropriate object for many photographs in Lincolnton throughout the first half of the twentieth century. This large stone stood at the site of the Battle of Ramsour's Mill. The Daughters of the American Revolution had the rock moved from the site to the courthouse lawn, where it currently rests.

The Indian Creek Dredging



In 1909 the North Carolina General Assembly established in Chapter 443 of Public Laws a drainage district in Lincoln and Gaston counties to "promote the public health, convenience, and welfare by leveling, ditching, and draining the wet swamp and overflowed lands...providing for the establishment of levee or drainage districts for the purpose of enlarging or changing any natural water courses, and for digging ditches or canals for securing better drainage for building levees or embankments." This district was known as the Indian Creek Drainage District of Lincoln and Gaston counties and measured one mile in width and eight miles in length. This law stated that

the court would appoint three persons to be designated as the board of drainage commissioners, but these commissioners first had to be elected by the property owners in the drainage district. From their board they elected a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary, and the country treasurer served as the ex officio treasurer on the board.

On June 28, 1915, the *Lincoln County News* reported that Secretary Sullivan of the Indian Creek Drainage District explained that "satisfactory progress was being made on the dredging." As the article was published, the "dredging machine was passing the upper bridge near Crouse, the bridge having been put out of commission for the present...five miles have been dredged and there remains about two and one-half miles more work to be done before the work is completed." The plans were to reach to the Seaboard Bridge about July 10, 1915, and the Railway made plans to accommodate the dredger under the bridge. Members of the community took a great interest in the dredging, as the crane tore up stumps and rocks. The *Lincoln County News* reporter received a free tour in "Womack's racer" on Friday, June 25 with C.V. Tilson.



Richard Ramseur documented the dredging of Indian Creek on June 25, 1915. Photographs from the Richard Ramseur Photograph Collection.

Upcoming Events:

June 7, 2008

Making Faces with Mike Ball

June 28, 2008

LCHA Annual Meeting

Lincoln Cultural Center Reception Hall
11:00 am to 1:30 pm

July 25 - August 24

Catawba Valley Potter Michael Ball's One Man Show

Exhibition Opening: Saturday, July 26, 2008
6:30 - 8:00 pm

Coming this Summer - LCHA Archaeology Camp!

Learn about the history of Lincoln County through the eyes of an archaeologist. This is a hands-on camp focusing on archaeology in the field and the techniques used by archaeologists during excavation. Methods and techniques taught include grid and unit placement, excavation, artifact recovery, and processing of recovered materials.

For 8th & 9th graders starting in July. Go to our web site - www.LincolnCountyHistory.com - to learn more!

Did
You
Know

Two men from Lincoln County have been awarded The Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military honor: Captain Rufus Z. Johnston, and Sergeant Jerry Crump.

Become a Member!

Please encourage your friends and family to join the LCHA and assist us with our efforts to collect and preserve Lincolnton and Lincoln County's rich history. You can find a membership form on our website (www.LincolnCountyHistory.com), in addition to benefits at each level of membership. Make checks payable to LCHA, 403 East Main Street, Lincolnton, NC 28092. Members are encouraged to submit articles and information that may be of interest to the Association.

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