

THE GIBSONVILLE MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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D.A.R Grave Marking Ceremony (for John Montgomery)

Bethel Presbyterian Church was organized in 1812 as the Cedar Creek Church on land owned by Andrew Gibson and his sons Joseph and Moses. It was located in the present day Gibsonville Cemetery on Springwood Avenue south of downtown. Around 1815, the church moved to McLeansville, where it is still located today at 300 Knox Road. The Gibson family continued to attend Cedar Creek Church in its new location. A notable contemporary to Andrew Gibson was John Montgomery, who was received into the Church August 13, 1826.

John Montgomery was born in Lancaster, PA in 1762 and moved with his father to Guilford County in 1767. He was a private in the Revolutionary War and, like Andrew Gibson, fought at the Battle of Guilford County Courthouse (1781). Following the war, John worked as a farmer, mechanic, and gristmill owner. He died May 13, 1840 and is buried in the Bethel Church cemetery. Located in the same cemetery are his son (Elijah W. Montgomery), grandson (P. Morrison Montgomery), and two granddaughters (Margaret D. M. Summers and Rachel F. M. Summers-Shephard). On April 9, 2016, the Colonel Arthur Forbis Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) held a grave marking ceremony for this early American patriot.

Annual Meeting Reminder

The GMHSI will be having its annual, open meeting on Saturday, September 10 @ 10:30 AM in Town Hall (129 West Main Street). We welcome all of our members to attend. At this event, we will 1) update you on activities of the GMHSI over the last calendar year and 2) hear your suggestions, advice, and feedback on our current and future direction. We encourage you to let us know what goals and priorities you may have that our organization can address.

Historical Spotlight: F. Marion Smith House at 204 Railroad Avenue, Gibsonville

The F. Marion Smith house can be considered one of the finest architectural structures in Gibsonville. It was built in 1898 and is one of the three most impressive Queen Anne Victorian style homes in eastern Guilford County. The other two are the homes of Dr. W. T. Whitsett (at 7218 Whitsett Park Road, Whitsett) and Prof. J. H. and Effie Whitsett Joyner (at 721 S. NC Hwy 61, Whitsett). This downtown Gibsonville property is on the National Register of Historic Places and was also the first site designated a historic property by the Guilford County Joint Historic Preservation Commission. F. Marion Smith was born in January 1864. He was the son of Elisha Lafayette (E.L.) and Nancy Cummings Smith (the daughter of Dr. Thomas Cummings). Marion's father and Phillip Isley opened one of the first stores in town. Later E. L. Smith opened a livery stable and his son, F. Marion Smith, joined the business. This business was located about where the present Sherries on Main is located today. The livery was a thriving business which sold fertilizer and hay. It also created income by carrying students and parents from the Gibsonville train station to the nearby Whitsett Institute, a highly regarded private school. During his life Mr. Smith served on the Gibsonville Board of Alderman, was one of the first directors of the Bank of Gibsonville (established 1907), and owned rental and farm properties in both Guilford and Alamance Counties.

In 1897, F. M. Smith married Lizzie E. Whitsett. The Smith's had one child, Willie Whitsett

Smith. Willie was born in 1905 and died in 1908, as many young children did during the turn of the century. Mr. Smith himself died in 1910 at the age of 46. The Smiths were members of the Friedens Lutheran Church and the family is buried in the church cemetery. Following F.M's death, his wife remained in their home for approximately one year. She sold the family business to J. R. Pettigrew (who relocated the livery building) and moved into her parents home in Whitsett. The house was left vacant until Mr. Varner, the local depot agent, rented the residence. After Mr. Varner's tenancy, it was used by the Story family as a boarding house. Upon the death of Mrs. Smith, her sister Effie Joyner inherited the property. Effie and her husband Prof. J. H. Joyner divided the house into two rental apartments. Miss Iris Ruth, a teacher at the Gibsonville School, rented the upstairs apartment for more than forty years. Today the F. Marion Smith house is a private residence owned by Jim and Susan Ezekiel.



About the Gibsonville Museum & Historical Society, Inc: The GMHSI is a member funded, non-profit organization created to promote public knowledge of local, state, and national history (with an emphasis on the history of Gibsonville). The GMHSI has regional related historical artifacts as well as revolving exhibits at the Gibsonville Museum. The Museum is located at 219 East Main Street in downtown Gibsonville and is open on the third Saturday of each month from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. For information on membership, the Museum, donations, or otherwise, please email info@gmhsi.org, call us at 336-449-5678, or visit us at the Museum.

Town of Gibsonville Historic Marker Dedication

By Jerry Nix

The Town of Gibsonville was honored on Saturday, July 16, 2016 by the unveiling of a historic marker to celebrate the founding and history of the town. The marker has been placed beside the Railroad Caboose near the town green in downtown.

The dedication ceremony featured remarks made by Mayor Leonard Williams and Neil Bromilow. The unveiling featured Mrs. Jean Lippard and her family including sons David, William ("Bill") and wife Christina, and Joan Mansfield (sister to Jean Lippard). This featured family are the descendants of Jane Gibson, wife of Jesse Thompson. Jane was sister to Joseph Gibson, who died without children. In attendance for this ceremony were members of the Gibsonville Museum and other interested citizens.

The marker reads as follows:

"Gibsonville
Chartered Feb. 18, 1871

Gibsonville is named for Joseph Gibson (1785-1857), a local plantation owner who provided grading services to the NC Railroad in 1851. The first train arrived on October 9, 1855 and the depot was named Gibson Station. On February 1871, Gibsonville was granted a town charter. It is known as "the City of Roses" for the mass of rose bushes along the railroad tracks.

Presented by the Bromilow
Family 2016"



Photograph by Ivan Saul Cutler of (from left to right) Jean Lippard, Neil Bromilow, and Mayor Lenny Williams.

This is a first in a series of markers planned to identify land marks throughout the town. The GMHSI would like to give special thanks to Neil Bromilow and his family, who gave this marker to the town.

Historic Walking Tour

For those interested in experiencing history first hand, Gibsonville's Promotions Committee has recently published a Historic Walking Tour. This walking tour is focused in and around downtown Gibsonville. Participation will allow you and your family to get some exercise, visit our local merchants, and be educated about town history all at the same time. It is available both at www.gmhsi.org (under the History link) and also in pamphlet form in Town Hall.

While you are downtown, please visit us at our Museum. The Museum is located at 219 East Main Street in downtown Gibsonville. It is open on the third Saturday of each month from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM and during larger town events.

Archive & Artifact Donations Details

The Museum takes donations related to Gibsonville's economic, social, and political history. We accept documents (archives) and objects (artifacts) for our collection and Museum. The critical common denominator of any kind of donation is their direct or indirect-but-clear relationship to Gibsonville.

- Donated documents generally have included genealogical or family records, agency records (stores, businesses, government), photographs, and printed matter. These include birth and death records, occupational and military records, letters, diaries, memoirs, scrapbooks (these often contain valuable information), books, broadsheet advertisements, newspaper clippings, and the like.
- Objects collections cover a wide ranging variety of subjects, including, tools, furniture, weapons, machinery, medicines, jewelry, sports, education, and art.

The Gibsonville Museum is always ready to consider any donation. People often mistakenly feel that a donation must be sizable or with numerous components to be relevant or worth consideration. Sometimes it is the smallest object or the single reference in a document that is the most telling. Perhaps it is a signature of someone important or a small fact not known to date. Regardless, when placed in context to other elements of the collection, seemingly minor or mundane things can enhance our knowledge of Gibsonville.

While all donations are appreciated, the GMHSI is especially interested in:

- Objects or documents that precede the incorporation of the town; for example, having to do with early settlement activities. Not much is known about the settlement of this area prior to the construction of the railroad in 1849-1857.
- April 2017 will be the century mark for the United States' entry into the World War. Two million servicemen were sent overseas, supported by men and women serving in the Medical Corps, the Red Cross, and other auxiliary groups. Undoubtedly some of them were from Gibsonville. Currently the Museum has few military collections and nothing of the First World War. The Museum would benefit by having a stronger military collection to reflect the service of the men and women of our community.
- Gibsonville School Annuals from 1949, 50, 60, 68, 69, 70, 71 and 74.

The GMHSI is a non-profit, member funded, 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. Donations are both tax deductible and greatly appreciated. Donations are considered for acceptance and received during traditional Museum hours (the third Saturday of each month from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM). If this is not convenient, please contact Curator Howard Hendricks at 336-516-6773 or Deleno Flynn at 336-266-8304.

Gibsonville Museum and Historical Society Inc.

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