

THE GIBSONVILLE MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Berry Davidson Plaque Dedication

Berry Davidson was born in 1831 in Randolph County. At the age of 14, he began his apprenticeship under mill wright Solomon Dixon. This apprenticeship lasted for two years and was terminated when his father died. In order to support his family after his father's death, Berry went out on his own and traveled to wherever he could find work. During his lifetime, he built forty mills, at least two houses, and four churches. Most of these buildings were in Alamance and Guilford County but he also completed buildings in Chatham, Cumberland, Davidson, Moore, Orange, Randolph, and Wake Counties. In the late 1880's, Mr. Davidson joined the Gibsonville community. In Gibsonville, Mr. Berry Davidson built 1) the Minneola Mill (the largest building in our downtown which is located on Railroad Avenue), 2) the

Hiawatha Mill ("behind" our downtown at 138 Eugene Street), 3) his home (built 1891 and located at 305 Church Street), and 4) his church (302 Church Street). He transformed Gibsonville from a small crossroads community to a thriving textile center.

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Personally, he was married to Mary Fletcher, who born him six children before she passed. After her death, Berry married Emily Holt Newlin and had three more children. Besides being a leader in business and active family man, Berry was also Gibsonville's Mayor from 1907 – 1913. It is notable that the Davidson family

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continued to contribute to the Gibsonville community for generations to follow. For example, in 1913, Berry lost the mayorship to one of his sons, D.M. Davidson. D. M. ultimately became the longest serving Mayor in Gibsonville's history. In 1947, the Davidson family started Engineered Plastics. This is still an active business in Gibsonville (at Burlington Avenue @ Apple Street northeast of downtown).

For his many contributions, the Gibsonville Museum & Historical Society honored Mr. Berry Davidson on February 18th, 2017 (the town's 146th birthday). A plaque was erected on Little Avenue near where Berry built his Gibsonville home, two mills, and church. Little Avenue is located between downtown and the Gibsonville Library off of Highway 61 and Church Street.

Update on the 515 Church Street Redevelopment

Purchased in late 2016 by Jerry Nix, the prior Bartlett's Funeral Home property is under redevelopment. As late as the time of purchase, this property had damage from a fallen tree through its roof and was in serious decline. This property is today being stabilized and returned to its 1912 condition. Redevelopment to this home has included a new roof, new systems, demolition of an existing wing (due to significant damage due to the down tree), as well as interior improvements. While this property is not being developed for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, its redevelopment will be true to historic standards. Please note that entitlement for the National Register takes nine months to one year and this property could not have survived the waiting period. After stabilization, this property will be available for sale as a single family residence (which is anticipated in late 2017 or early 2018).



Board of Director's Spotlight: Jerry Nix

Gibsonville Museum & Historical Society Inc (GMHSI) Board of Directors donate their talents and time to ensure that Gibsonville's history is preserved. This Board is composed of a group of varied members from a variety of professions, each of whom serves a three-year term. For a full list of GMHSI Board of Directors members, see About on our website www.gmhsi.org.

For his many past and current contributions, the GMHSI spotlights one of these Board of Directors members: Jerry Nix. Besides being President of Harris-Johnson Industries in Greensboro, he has been an active preservationist throughout his life. Mr. Nix has historically preserved six houses, one commercial building, a post office, and the Bethel Presbyterian Church's Session House. For these redevelopments, he has won numerous awards including 1) Preservation North Carolina - Carraway Award of Merit (twice), 2) Preservation Greensboro - Preservation Award, and 3) Daughters of the American Revolution - The Historic Preservation Metal. He also authored the publication One Hundred, Sixty Years History of Bethel Presbyterian Church 1812- 1972. Today, he is in the process of historic preservation of the 515 Church Street property listed above. Civically, Mr. Nix has been a Board of Advisers member for Preservation North Carolina (a long established nonprofit which actively saves historic properties statewide; www.presnc.org) and also was the prior Chair of Guilford County's Historic Preservation Commission. Jerry Nix was an active part of the creation of the Gibsonville Museum & Historical Society. He has been a member since its inception in 2010. The GMHSI is thankful for Mr. Nix's contributions and commitment to our shared mission.

History In Need: Henry Troxler House at 200 NC Highway 100

This early 1900's home is listed in the Guilford County inventory as a potential historic property. With entitlement work, this four bedroom with one bath 2,875 SF residence could be brought back into service. Per local sources, this home has not been occupied in 20+ years. It will require stabilization work as well as new systems. The home does come with a large lot and is on a 27 acre, six parcel tract. This property and land is listed for \$224,900 (as of January 2017). For details, contact Aspenwood Realtors agent Wylie Bean @ 336-467-7607 or awbean4@gmail.com.



“Coffee & Conversation”

On May 13, the GMHSI met for “Coffee & Conversation” with a group of local citizens. “Coffee & Conversation” is a social event to privately showcase the museum for those who might want to participate in its operations. For this event, docents Edna Jo Hackett and Peggy Cheshire were on hand to greet our guests and show them around the collection, which concluded with the Gibsonville School exhibit. Many of these guests were excited to find familiar faces of aunts, uncles, and grandparents among the museum photographs. Following this personal tour, our curator Howard Hendricks explained ways that volunteers assist museums. Examples include assisting with clerical duties, organizing archives and artifacts, and preparing new exhibits and programs, as well as serving as museum guide / docent. Notably, Anne Manuli offered to assist Howard with conservation tasks (receiving, recording, cleaning and storing items of historic value). This was the first such event for us and gave the GMHSI another opportunity to showcase our museum. We plan to offer another “Coffee & Conversation” social in mid-October and would like to invite you to attend. Please email us at info@gmhsi.org if you would like an invitation.

World War One Anniversary & Request

April 2017 marked the centennial of United States participation in World War One (WWI). While we know of numerous contributions to this cause by Gibsonville residents, the Museum has few artifacts related to this time period and subject. We would like to increase our collection in this regard. To that end, the GMHSI requests community donations and/or exhibition loans of items related to WWI. This can include items related to the military, the home front, or auxiliary organizations like the Red Cross or the YMCA. Moreover, we would like to locate items for both men and womens' activities. The GMHSI has been invited by Alamance Community College to participate in a special traveling exhibit about WWI (which would open in early 2018). With your assistance, we can make contributions to this exhibit. Please visit us at the Museum or email us about any potential donations or exhibit loans. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Annual Meeting Reminder

The GMHSI will host its annual meeting on September 9, 2017 at 10 AM in Town Hall. At this meeting, we will review with our members and the public the GMHSI's annual activities and future plans. This meeting is open to the public and is also your chance to let us know about your concerns and ideas. We hope you will attend and look forward to seeing you in September. If you cannot attend this meeting, please email us any topics you would like considered.

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 first Saturday of each month (as of January 2017) 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.

Gibsonville Museum and Historical Society Inc.
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