

# MITCHELL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## SECOND QUARTER NEWSLETTER 2019

### HARRIS MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS CREATE MITCHELL COUNTY BOOKS

Eighth grade students at Harris Middle School recently ended the year with a reception, before their 8<sup>th</sup> grade awards and graduation ceremony, in celebration of the completion of a very challenging project. The reception was in honor of each of the 83 students completing a personal, hard-back Mitchell County history book. The books were displayed for parents, family, and friends to see.

These books, literally put together from scratch, were a collaborative project between Penland School of Crafts and Harris Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade North Carolina History teacher Chris Hollifield. Hollifield is also a member of the board of the Mitchell County Historical Society.

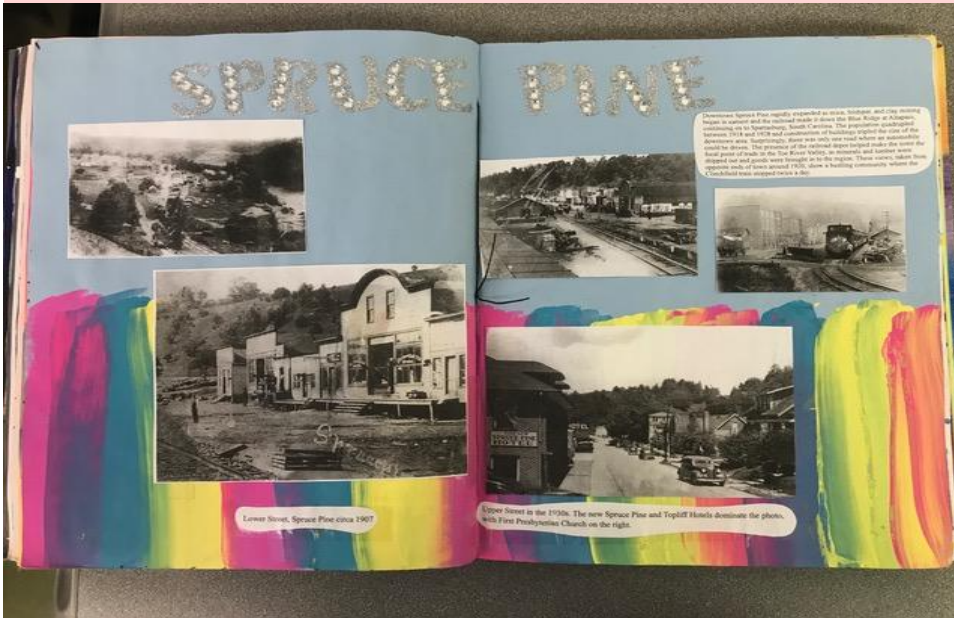
The project began in September 2018, when Penland teaching artist Meg Peterson came into the classroom and began explaining the project to the students. Many of the students were familiar with the process, but not with the complexity of the content that was expected from them.



Peterson visited the classroom twice before the students actually went to the Penland Campus in October to start making the books.

When the students were not actually making the physical book, they worked on the contents of the book, which would cover the history of Mitchell County from the Native Americans that traversed the area to the first European Explorers and early settlers.

Some of the other major topics included were The Revolutionary War and the Overmountain Men, The Creation of Mitchell County, The Civil War, Mitchell County Communities, Minerals and Mining, Spruce Pine, Roan Mountain and the Cloudland Hotel, The NC Museum of Minerals and the Blue Ridge Parkway, Lucy Morgan and the Penland School of Crafts, Bakersville – the County Seat, as well as many others.



After a snowy December, students scrambled to get a lot of writing, drawing, and coloring completed on the books. The 6 sections of the books had to be sewn to the hardback, so Meg once again, trudging through snow delays, came into the classroom and taught the students how to sew the sections into the book. The work continued frantically

until June 5; the last day of school was June 6! These books will hopefully be a reminder of our county's rich heritage and a keepsake of a lifetime for these students.

## MCHS SUMMER SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**MCHS is halfway through its 2019 programs, with great presentations in April, May, and June.**

- **On July 15<sup>th</sup>, we'll visit Calvin Hall in Spruce Pine for a look at his amazing collection of Mitchell County artifacts.**
- **On August 19<sup>th</sup>, Rhonda Gouge will give us another wonderful program on Mitchell County musicians.**
- **Regular programs wrap up on September 16<sup>th</sup> when Kathy Huie presents a program on Lydia Holman, nurse practitioner in Mitchell County.**

**Mark your calendars for the third Monday each month July through September!**

## Macie Stafford Receives Historical Society's McRae Scholarship

Mitchell County Historical Society is excited to announce that Macie Danielle Stafford is the recipient of its Third Annual Inez McRae Scholarship. Macie, the daughter of Tom and Michelle Stafford of Spruce Pine, is a 2019 graduate of Mitchell High School.



Brandon Dean Pittman, MCHS Board Member, presents Macie Stafford with the 2019 Inez

Macie's academic achievements include Student of the Year in American History I and II and 2018 Junior Marshall. She was Varsity Cheerleading Captain, MHS Yearbook Business Manager, and was involved in FBLA and the Aviation Club activities. Macie was also a 2018 participant in the Martha Guy Summer Institute at Appalachian State University. She plans to attend ASU, with a major in Computer Information Systems and a minor in Graphic Arts and Imaging Technology.

The MCHS scholarship is awarded to a high school senior from Mitchell County who demonstrates an interest in Appalachian studies, including, but not limited to history, music, art, folk culture, and economic or community development. The student selected should also exhibit a desire to pursue this interest at a higher educational level and express a desire to eventually live and work in Appalachia.

The scholarship honors Inez McRae, founding member, anchor, and guiding force of Mitchell County Historical Society. Inez taught school for many years in Mitchell County, so it is quite fitting that our annual scholarship bears her name. Inez currently lives in Winston-Salem.

### DELLINGER'S MILL

Dellinger's Mill has been a fixture of Mitchell County's Hawk Community since the mid 1860s. The Mill is currently owned and operated by Jack Dellinger, who is the fourth generation of Dellinger family to grind corn on that site.

The mill was founded by Reuben Dellinger and was originally located in present day Avery County. Reuben moved the mill over to the present site after his wife was killed in a mill related accident.

Jack Dellinger left Mitchell County as a young man and received an Engineering degree from NC State and went to work for IBM. Jack had a long career at IBM, but the highlight has to be the work Jack did on the US program to land a man on the moon. Jack was deeply involved in programming the computer for the Saturn V moon rocket.



After retiring from IBM, Jack returned to Mitchell County, rebuilt the mill dam and brought the mill back to operation. Jack has been grinding corn for almost 20 years. The mill is currently open on Friday and Saturday from 10 AM to 4 PM and Sunday from noon to 4 PM.

Jack is now in his mid 80s and recognizes that he can't operate the mill forever. Moreover, since the mill is the only gristmill of its kind left in North Carolina, it is a treasured asset of Mitchell County and must be preserved. For that reason Jack has agreed to the formation of a non-profit corporation controlled by the Dellinger family.

The formation of a non-profit is the essential first step to insure the continued operation of the mill. Equally important is the need to mobilize the community to help keep this priceless jewel in operation!

Jack and several of his friends believe the answer is to establish a Friends Of The Mill organization. While the exact nature of Friends Of The Mill is still to be determined, he contemplates recruiting volunteers to help keep the mill in operation as a fully functioning gristmill. They will also need volunteers to help keep the mill in good mechanical condition. Equally important will be the need to help keep the mill afloat financially. As a non-profit, contributions will be tax deductible and the hope is the community will enthusiastically embrace the opportunity to support the mill.

In the near future there will be an organizational meeting of Friends Of The Mill. The date and location of the meeting is still to be determined. The Mitchell News-Journal will have information about the meeting once it's scheduled and The Mitchell Historical Society will send out an alert to the email list.

We hope that the citizens of Mitchell will embrace the opportunity to keep this over 150 year old historical artifact in operation. In the meantime, Jack would love for you to visit, tour the mill and perhaps buy some grits, corn meal or polenta.



### **WE NEED YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES**

The Mitchell County Historical Society has important work to do, and we need your help. The MCHS Mission is to collect, preserve, protect, and publicly display material that is historically significant to Mitchell County, NC. The Society also strives to make the citizens of Mitchell County aware of their heritage. Please help us accomplish these goals by sending in your membership dues now. Membership fees are \$20 for an individual and \$25 for a family.