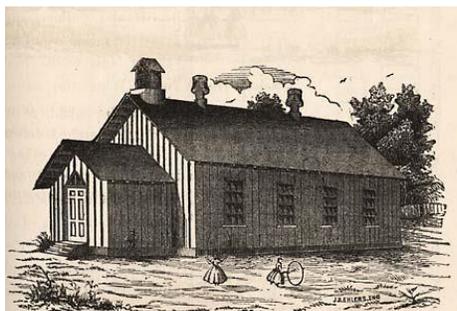




# Update

## Freedmen’s Bureau Schoolhouse Preservation



Exterior plan from an 1869 report of the NC Dept. of Public Instruction, showing a two-room schoolhouse similar to the one built in Smithfield.

An effort is underway to preserve one of the nation’s rarest historic resources right here in Johnston County. In 2010 it was confirmed that a rental dwelling on North Fourth Street in Smithfield is a former two-room schoolhouse erected by the federal Freedmen’s Bureau in 1868-1869. First Missionary Baptist Church acquired the building and lot in August 2016 for future expansion, and church members recently decided to offer the structure either to the Town of Smithfield or to the Johnston County Heritage Center if a suitable lot is made available for its relocation. Heritage Center Director Todd Johnson is spearheading a movement to relocate and restore the building so that it can become an educational resource and meeting place. For more information on this project and ways to get involved,

contact Todd by email at [todd.johnson@johnstonnc.com](mailto:todd.johnson@johnstonnc.com), or by phone at 919-934-2836.

## Ghost Walk 2017

On October 26, five notable departed Johnston County personalities will be brought back to life during our 13<sup>th</sup> annual Ghost Walk. Telling their stories in Smithfield’s historic Riverside Cemetery will be:

**Dr. Calvin Jones, 18<sup>th</sup> century physician,** portrayed by Craig Baker

**Simon Godwin, turpentine man,** portrayed by Shaun Braswell

**Blanche Mitchiner, pioneer telephone operator,** portrayed by Cheryl Oliver

**Private Hubert Banks, World War I Harlem Hellfighter,** portrayed by Kenny Howell

**Florence Adams, Socialite and Red Cross leader,** portrayed by Joyce Kilpatrick-Jordan

The event begins at 6:30 pm beside St. Paul’s Episcopal Church at the corner of Second and Church Streets. At the conclusion, visitors can enjoy refreshments in the Hastings House, an antebellum Greek-Revival style house where Confederate Generals were headquartered during the Civil War.



**Dr. Calvin Jones**

Admission cost is \$3 for adults and \$2 for students in grades K-12 (free to children under 5). Tours are conducted on a first-come, first-served basis, and no advance tickets will be sold. For more information, call the Heritage Center at 919-934-2836.

*This event is sponsored in part by the Johnston County Visitors Bureau and is presented in collaboration with the Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation.*

## From the Director

Our readers will be pleased to know that history is still being made and the materials that tell our story—books, papers, photographs, three-dimensional artifacts, audio-visual and digital media—are being preserved. That's the good news. The bad news is that these pieces of history require physical space, something we are quickly running out of. The Heritage Commission has begun serious conversations about space so that we can continue to accept and properly care for important relics of our past. We welcome ideas and suggestions that will help us make wise decisions that will serve us well for years to come.

In light of recent developments regarding Confederate monuments, allow me to make a few comments. Since Johnston is one of the few Southern counties without a Confederate statue on our courthouse square, we have been spared some of the attention given to other places. But what if there were one? Should it be toppled, relocated, or left alone? In my opinion, each monument should be evaluated based on its own individual context. For example, the memorial to fallen Confederate soldiers in Smithfield's Riverside Cemetery, surprisingly enough, was erected at the behest of a former Union cavalry officer several years before Jim Crow laws. History is not to be based on nostalgia or a white-washed past. Neither is it to be based on uninformed, emotion-driven obsession but, rather, on a pursuit of truth and understanding. Otherwise, we are purveyors of "fake history." Younger generations have demonstrated they want none of it! Let's not miss opportunities for us to use history to inform the present in meaningful ways.

**Todd**

### HERITAGE CENTER BASICS

The Johnston County Heritage Center is located at 241 E. Market Street in Downtown Smithfield.

Our phone number: 919-934-2836

Our mailing address: P.O. Box 2709, Smithfield, NC 27577

Our web address: [www.jcheritagecenter.org](http://www.jcheritagecenter.org)

Hours of operation: Monday-Saturday, 9 am to 5 pm



*Preserving and Sharing Johnston County's Unique Story*

### Johnston County Heritage Commission

Pam Baumgartner	Stanton Massengill
Brian Beasley	Mary Stephens
Pearl Blackmon	Vicky Temple-Rains
John Booker	Myra Wallace
Suzanne Cook	Larry Wood
Charles Creech	<b>Emeriti:</b>
Matt Dean	Belle Allen
Carolyn Ennis	Elsie Collins
Mary Nell Ferguson	Ossie Fields
Warren Grimes	Wingate Lassiter
Ann Hucklenbeck	Becky Renfrow
Frank Knott	Helen Smith

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**"The Johnston County Story,"** sponsored by the Heritage Center on WTSB Radio, 105.5 FM, 1090 AM,

*aired monthly each 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday at 2:15 pm*

**Thursday, October 26, 2017, 6:30-9 pm,**  
Ghost Walk

**November 17, 2017, 5-9 pm,** the Heritage Center will be a stop on the Smithfield Wine Walk, a popular local event benefitting Harbor of Johnston County.

**February 3, 2018 (tentative), 11 am,** opening of exhibit on Bootlegging in Johnston County

**March 13, 2018, 6:30,** Patrons' Dinner, Johnston County Agricultural Center

## Newest Heritage Commission Members

Our most recent additions to the Heritage Commission are Suzanne Benton Cook of Benson, Warren Grimes and Frank Knott of Smithfield, and County Commissioner Larry Wood of Four Oaks. We are grateful to have them on our team as we guide the future of the Heritage Center.



Cook



Grimes



Knott



Wood

## Four Oaks-Benson newspaper microfilming

In 1992 the NC Division of Archives and History began a newspaper microfilming project and filmed all the extant Johnston County papers up to that time—that is, except the *Benson Review*. By the time this oversight came to light, funding for the project was gone. Now, 25 years later, we are getting these papers filmed. The Four Oaks and Benson papers have since merged, so we plan to include remaining issues of the *Four Oak News* as well.



If you know the whereabouts of **the following missing years of the *Benson Review***, we would very much appreciate hearing from you:

**1956, 1957, 1960, 1961, 1963, 1965, 1966, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1981.**

We would also be grateful for your financial assistance in preserving these valuable historical records. Contributions can be made in honor or in memory of a loved one, and any amount is appreciated.

## World War I Exhibit

Our current exhibit, “**Over There: Johnstonians and World War I,**” runs through January 2018 in the Holding-Richardson Exhibit Hall. Special thanks to all those who have provided artifacts on loan to tell the stories of Johnston County men and women in the Great War, or the so-called “war to end all wars.” Research for this exhibit revealed previously unknown war heroes, including African American soldiers from our county who fought with the famous Harlem Hellfighters and other decorated combat units in the French Army. Among the many colorful personalities in the exhibit, two stand out. One was a Baptist minister in Four Oaks accused of being a German spy. The other was a former Selma Academy professor who came up with a scheme that President Woodrow Wilson credited with bringing an early end to the war. Learn more by visiting the Heritage Center in person. For children, there is a scavenger hunt.

Heritage Center docents are working on a complete list of Johnston County soldiers who served in World I. If there was a Doughboy in your family, please bring photos, letters, and other materials to add to our files. We will accept originals as well as copies.

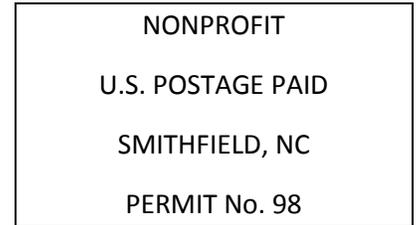


Diane Ballentine and Dewana Gail Bagley pose with a display of items on their uncle, Rev. Willis Williams, recipient of the French Croix de Guerre.

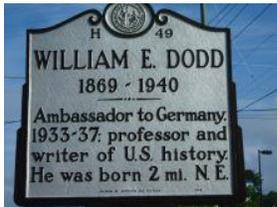


P.O. Box 2709  
241 E. Market Street  
Smithfield, NC 27577

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## Historical Marker Program



The Heritage Commission has formed a committee to identify and mark sites which are not currently included in the state's Highway Historical Marker Program but which are deemed to have special historical significance. This initiative is being funded in part by a 50/50 matching grant from the Johnston County Visitors Bureau. The following guidelines were adopted:

1. All markers are authorized by the Johnston County Heritage Commission.
2. All markers designate places or persons of *local, state or national significance*.
3. All marker inscriptions will be drafted or approved by the Johnston County Heritage Commission's designated Historical Marker Committee.
4. No individual can be marked prior to a waiting period of *twenty-five years after death*.
5. As a general rule, markers for cemeteries are not approved by the Committee.
6. The Committee will not single out individuals to mark when many persons have shared equally in an event of historical importance.
7. As a general rule, when the birthplace or gravesite of an individual has been marked, that individual will not be marked with a second marker.
8. No structure, whether a house or public building, will be marked merely to preserve it.
9. Marker requests will be rejected when it is impossible to authenticate or verify the alleged information to the satisfaction of the Committee. If there is conflicting evidence, the Committee will make the decision. Unless there is sufficient documentary evidence to establish authenticity without question, no "firsts" will be marked. The Committee will decide what evidence is acceptable and sufficient.