

The Granite Tablet



Volume 10, Number 5

A Publication of the Granite Falls History Committee

December 2022

GOOD NEWS FOR GRANITE FALLS *Town Received Special Grants*

Improvements are coming to the campus of the William B. Shuford Recreation Center thanks to grants awarded to the Town of Granite Falls by the State of North Carolina. The State Capital and Infrastructure Fund and the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund will help pay for a new parking lot with 85 spaces, two (2) outdoor ADA restrooms, an ADA walkway from field #3 to the children's playground, and a state of the art splash pad with a sports theme. The photo below, made on Wednesday, December 21, 2022, shows the site preparation for the parking lot.



The Town of Granite Falls will also receive \$4,999,000 for other projects, yet to be determined, from the Rural Community Development (RCD) Fund. Granite Falls was the first recipient of the RCD Fund, which was approved by the N. C. General Assembly. The official announcement came on Monday, November 19, 2022 from the North Carolina Department of Commerce. In total, the state granted 30 Community Development Block Grant - Neighborhood Revitalization (CDBG - NR) grants to 27 counties and municipalities.

WINTER STORM ELLIOTT *Arctic Blast Puts a Chill on Christmas*

From December 21 through December 26, 2022, an arctic blast moved south from Canada into the Midwest, the Northern Rockies, Texas, and the East Coast. Local temperatures dipped to the low teens and single digits at night with wind chill factors well below zero. Daytime highs remained below freezing. Duke Power and Blue Ridge Energy implemented rolling blackouts on December 24th, leaving their customers without electricity for an hour at a time to conserve power.

(ARCTIC BLAST continued on page 2)



Santa Claus came to town on December 3, 2022

IMPACT BY ROTARY CLUB OF THE FOOTHILLS *Presents* *"Candy Land Christmas"*

The Town of Granite Falls held its annual Christmas parade on Saturday, December 3, 2022 beginning at noon in the parking lot of the First Baptist Church. Participants followed the parade route along Chestnut Street, Falls Avenue, North Main Street, and North Highland Avenue to the Granite Falls Elementary School. Impact by Rotary Club of the Foothills sponsored the parade and donated proceeds to provide scholarships for students at South Caldwell High School. Linda Crowder made a video of the parade, posted it to "Granite Falls (N. C.) History and Transportation Museum" Facebook page, and made a DVD for the museum. Shown below: The Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc. sponsored a float pulled by a vintage Ford tractor that belonged to the late James (Pib) Whisnant. It featured lollipops, candy canes, and a Christmas tree. Shown above: Santa Claus doesn't need snow to visit Granite Falls because he can hitch a ride on an antique fire truck that belongs to the family of the late Bert Huffman, a long time Mayor of Granite Falls. Check page 4 for more photos



Vintage Ford tractor pulled the GFHA Float

HISTORY IN THE MAKING *Living with COVID-19*

Caldwell County: COVID-19 remained an unwanted house guest in many homes, but the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) showed the county level as low risk on December 1st, 8th, and 15th. Then the county moved to the medium risk category on December 22nd and remained there on December 29th. It's probably not a coincidence that people had resumed their usual Christmas festivities that brought people together indoors in close quarters.

Federal News: On Wednesday, December 8, 2022, the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) gave emergency use authorization for the Moderna and Pfizer- BioNTech updated (bivalent) vaccine booster to be administered to children as young as six months old.

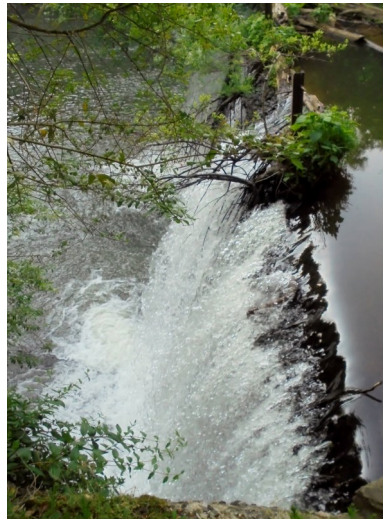
On Thursday, December 15, 2022, the White House announced that the federal government would resume sending out free COVID-19 tests. Each U. S. household would receive four (4) free at home, rapid COVID-19 tests if they ordered them from the website COVIDTests.gov. The government had suspended the original program on Friday, September 2, 2022 due to lack of funding.

(ARCTIC BLAST continued from page 1)

Thousands across the state were without electricity from downed trees and other weather related issues. Cold weather also interfered with plumbing, heating, and cable services. Many families who were able to celebrate Christmas together missed loved ones who were on duty assisting those in need.

While local conditions were far from ideal, they were much better than parts of the country that experienced blizzard conditions along with the cold weather. More than 50 people across the nation lost their lives due to Winter Storm Elliott. Many died in vehicles that couldn't move due to the massive snow. Others were stranded at airports due to cancelled flights. Southwest Airlines made national news by having the largest number of cancellations.

One of the hardest hit areas was Buffalo, N. Y. Cold air from Canada moving over the Great Lakes creates the perfect conditions for blizzards in Buffalo and the surrounding area. The city recorded more than 30 deaths and more than 50 inches of snow during the Christmas weekend. Wind gusts were 70 mph. Authorities expect to find more dead bodies after the storm subsides and people are able to get out and about.



HIDDEN TREASURE *in Granite Falls*

Recently, a newcomer to the area asks volunteers at the museum if they were familiar with a second dam located on Gunpowder Creek below the Mill Pond Dam. He had seen it while kayaking. They didn't know about the dam, but they knew the person to ask. Terry Holt, a graduate of Granite Falls High School and a local explorer, posted several photos of his trip to Little Dam on the Granite Falls Nation Facebook page in April 2016.

He gave Linda Crowder permission to print the photos, and she will put them on display at the museum in January.



HISTORY IN THE MAKING *Duke Street Cottages*

According to an article by Cindy Davis in the *News-Topic* on December 1, 2022, the Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Commission, Howard Building Science, and Tightline Designs held a ribbon cutting on Friday, November 18, 2022 to celebrate construction of the first five (5) Duke Street Cottages located between Duke Street and North Main Street. Plans call for six (6) more homes on the one acre plot of land. All of the houses will meet the U. S. Department of Energy Zero Energy Ready Home standard, and the community will include a solar pavilion for gatherings and charging stations for electric cars. Linda Crowder made the above photo on December 3, 2022.



Down Memory Lane



A CHRISTMAS LONG AGO

by Vera Lee Richards

The snow is falling softly outside my window as I sit gazing at the feathery snowflakes coming down. Another Christmas is near, and my mind journeys back in time to a snowy Christmas some seventy years ago when I was a small child.

It was Christmas Eve, and my family was going to my uncle's home for an old-fashioned Christmas get-together. My family lived only a short distance from my uncle and near an old millpond. We were soon chugging and bouncing along the winding, dirt road in our Model T Ford.

When we arrived at my uncle's house, my aunt greeted us warmly, and we gathered with other relatives around the warm and inviting fire. I looked around and wondered where my uncle was, but I soon forgot about him and began playing with my friends.

Suddenly, Santa Claus came bursting into the room with a big sack on his back. He had a white beard and was wearing a red suit. He was very jolly, and had the merriest eyes. Santa was laughing boisterously and saying loudly "Ho! Ho! Ho!"

Santa looked vaguely familiar, and then all of a sudden I knew instinctively that he was my uncle. My mother sensed my concern and leaned down and whispered that my uncle was just playing Santa for us children. She quickly assured me the real Santa would visit me on Christmas morning.

Santa began pulling toys from his sack for all the children. When he handed me a miniature ivory and green cook stove and tiny pots and pans, I was filled with indescribable joy. I glanced around at my brother Joe and he had that little smile hovering around his mouth and was busy playing with a shiny red car. I don't remember what Santa gave my cousins but they all looked happy. Later my aunt served us delicious goodies.

All too soon it was time to go home. I was reluctant to leave because I was having such a good time. Upon our arrival at home, mama and dad said it was time for bed if we wanted the real Santa to visit us on Christmas morning. I padded barefoot to the icy, cold bedroom and snuggled way down deep in the feather bed and soon was fast asleep.

Very early on that cold Christmas morning, Joe and I bounded out of bed and rushed to the sitting room where a warm and crackling fire was blazing in the fireplace. There was such a warm Christmassy atmosphere that filled the room. I could not contain the joy that flooded my heart when I saw the small gifts from Santa Claus, and in my stocking were oranges and other goodies. (We only got oranges at Christmas.) Joe and I were so happy and contented playing with our toys that time literally stood still for us on that unforgettable Christmas Day of so long ago.

Note: *A Christmas Long Ago* was written around Christmas time in 2002 by Vera Richards

HISTORY IN THE MAKING *Dateline: Granite Falls, N. C.* 1999 - 2024

The Town of Granite Falls will celebrate its 125th Anniversary on May 1, 2024, and the Granite Falls Historical Association plans to publish a history of the town that covers the last 25 years since Maxine McCall wrote *Etched in Granite - The History of Granite Falls, North Carolina* to commemorate the first 100 years. Linda Crowder, editor of both *The Granite Tablet* (the museum's newsletter) and *Tablet II* (the Association's newsletter) has been recording history as it happens ever since the Association decided to update *Etched in Granite*. She has been using excerpts from these two newsletters to write a chronological history of the town.

In addition, she plans to include a separate section called "Down Memory Lane," which features memories about Granite Falls and people who have lived here, such as the article on the left by one of Linda's cousins. Jeanne Whisnant is working with Linda to interview local residents who prefer to let someone else write their stories.

In previous articles about the update, Linda called the new book *Etched in Granite, Volume II*. However, the style, format, and content of Linda's work is different, and she has decided to give her history a different name - *Dateline: Granite Falls, N. C. 1999 - 2024*. Although *Dateline* will contain a short summary of the first hundred years, it will not duplicate *Etched in Granite*.

Persons interested in the history of Granite Falls will want both books. *Dateline* will not be available until 2024, but new, sealed in plastic copies of *Etched in Granite, The History of Granite Falls, North Carolina* by Maxine McCall are available now at the town office and at the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum for only \$25.00 each. Please beware of price gouging if you shop online. On December 28, 2022, Books Unplugged advertised a used copy of *Etched in Granite* for \$92.24 on Amazon. The illustration (below left) had a note in fine print "This is not the actual book cover." Shop locally, get the real book, and save money.



CELEBRATING A CANDY LAND CHRISTMAS IN GRANITE FALLS Saturday, December 3, 2022



The Granite Tablet is a publication of the Granite Falls History Committee, which manages the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum. The museum is located in the historic home of Andrew Baird, an early settler. The building is the second oldest residence in Caldwell County. The Baird House was built around 1795 with additions made over the next hundred years. The house remained a residence until 2001 when the owner sought permission to have it burned down due to the high cost of maintenance. Recognizing the historical significance of the building, the Town of Granite Falls purchased the home with the intentions of turning it into a museum. With the help of a grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation and hours of hard work by dedicated people, the vision became a reality. The Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum held its grand opening and ribbon cutting on January 18, 2007. Visit us on Facebook under "Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum." Our website is www.granitefallshistorymuseum.org.

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