



Volume 12, Number 3 A Publication of the Granite Falls History Committee August 2024

### TREASURE TROVE AT THE MUSEUM The Granite Falls Press

The Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum is currently featuring copies of *The Granite Falls Press* donated by Sam Erby, Jr., a former owner of the local paper. The papers cover 1976 through 1986, the last year of publication. The papers will be left on display through September before being removed to a storage area with copies from other years, where they can be accessed by appointment.

According to *Etched in Granite - The History of Granite Falls, North Carolina* by Maxine McCall, the first edition

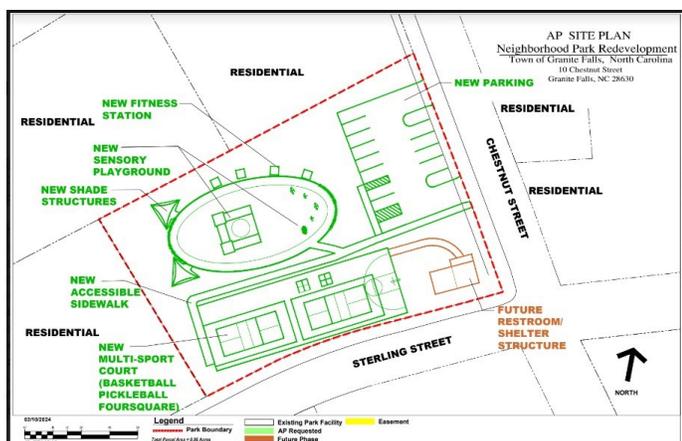
(THE GRANITE FALLS PRESS continued on page 2)



### PARKS AND RECREATION Receives Grant for Neighborhood Park

The Granite Falls Parks and Recreation Department is excited to announce that it has been awarded a \$500,000 Accessible Parks Grant from the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Authority. The funding, announced on Friday, August 23, at a meeting held at the Nature Research Center in Raleigh, North Carolina, will support the redevelopment of Neighborhood Park, located near the downtown area of Granite Falls. The grant is a matching fund, requiring \$100,000 from local funds.

(PARKS AND RECREATION continued on page 2)



### DECK THE HALLS With History

The Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc. and the Granite Falls Garden Club will work together to honor the town's 125th Anniversary by sponsoring an outdoor Christmas decorating contest. Judges will be looking for homes that celebrate the town's past and/or pay homage to the town's rich history. Ideas include utilizing vintage décor, positioning lights to imitate the waterfalls that gave our town its name, recreating scenes from vintage movies (the theme for this year's Christmas parade), or depicting an historical event. Garden Club members will judge the contest, and the Historical Association will publicize it. To be eligible, homes must have a Granite Falls address and be entered in the competition. The Historical Association will announce the specific dates of the contest along with instructions for how to enter in the next history newsletter.





The Granite Falls Garden Club recognized the 125th Anniversary of the Town of Granite Falls with this beautiful garden on the town square. Photo courtesy of Barbara Ross.

(THE GRANITE FALLS PRESS continued from page 1)

of this local paper was May 15, 1952. It contained these words by P. M. "Buddy" Amos, Jr., the publisher, "The Press is badly needed because the community does not have any means of promoting its interests, its merchandise, its social functions or any other activities." Assisting Mr. Amos with the local paper were Mary Frances Annas, Frank L. Smith, Jr. (of Smith Printing in Lenoir), Dick Cline (advertising), and Ruby Gibson (circulation).

In 1957, Mr. Powell sold the paper to Mr. Smith, who, in turn, sold it to Ralph and Ron Powell in 1966. In the meantime, Mary Frances Annas, one of the paper's original employees, married Clebard Fox. The couple bought the newspaper in 1967 and operated it, with their son, Maurice, until Clebard's death in 1982. Mrs. Fox sold the paper to Robert Lancaster in 1983, and he told it to Sam Erby, Jr. and Brad Wilson in 1984. Ronnie Thompson edited the paper until stopping publication in 1986.

*The Granite Falls Press* is a treasure trove for historical and genealogical research. It covered town and county board meetings, weddings, births, deaths, awards, vacations, fires, accidents, elections, school news, businesses, sports, etc. The collection may be seen between 2 and 4 p.m. on the following Sundays: September 8, 15, 22, and 29 and at other times by appointment. To make an appointment for another day/time, call the town office at (828) 396-3131.

## **CELEBRATING 125 YEARS Happy Birthday, Town of Granite Falls**

The Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc. invites the public to help celebrate the town's 125th Anniversary by attending its annual meeting on Tuesday, October 8, 2024, in the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum. The event will begin at 6 p.m. with dessert (125 Year Old Black Walnut Pound Cake with other options) followed by a brief business session and a special program about the History of Granite Falls. The GFHA treasurer will also accept dues from persons wishing to join or renew (individual - \$12, families - \$18, and businesses - \$25).

"We are thrilled to receive this funding from the Accessible Parks Grant," said Chad Raby, Town of Granite Falls Parks and Recreation Director. "This grant will allow us to renovate Neighborhood Park and make it more accessible and enjoyable for everyone in our community. We look forward to beginning construction in the Fall of 2025 and creating a space that all our residents can enjoy."

The redevelopment of Neighborhood Park aims to revitalize the space originally funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 1984. The current renovation project focuses on addressing the park's lack of ADA accessibility and will incorporate universal design principles to ensure inclusivity for all community members. Key upgrades will include:

**ADA-compliant features:** Installation of accessible parking, walkways, and multipurpose courts to ensure all visitors can navigate the park with ease.

**Outdoor exercise equipment:** Placement of accessible outdoor fitness stations that cater to a range of physical abilities.

**Shade structures:** Addition of shaded areas to provide comfort and protection from the elements.

**Sensory playground:** Creation of an inclusive play area designed to engage children of all abilities through sensory experiences.

The Accessible Parks Grant Program, administered by the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation and the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, provides \$12.5 million in matching grants to enhance parks and recreational facilities across the state. The program aims to fund projects that either construct new facilities or adapt existing ones to meet the unique needs of people living with disabilities, allowing them to participate in recreational and sporting activities, regardless of their abilities. (source: Town of Granite Falls news release prepared by Kara Calloway)

### **Splash Pad Update**

Although construction of the splash pad had to stop in April to resolve some issues, workers plan to resume work on Monday, September 2. The grand opening/ribbon cutting has been set for 10:00 a.m. on Friday, May 2, 2025. In the coming months, the Parks and Department will announce plans for a special event to be held that evening.



**TWO MAJOR WATER LINE BREAKS  
In One Weekend**

On Friday, August 23, 2024, around 1:30 p.m., someone reported on Facebook that she saw what looked like a sink hole along Hwy 321 North. The sink hole turned out to be a major water line break near Glen Ridge Drive according to a news release issued by the Town of Granite Falls and posted on the Police Department Facebook page. The town urged persons with water to conserve it and to boil water to be consumed. At the same time, north bound traffic had to detour via Hwy 321A. Later that night, the town experienced another main water line break in the River Bend community.

The GFPD posted the following updates:  
 August 24 at 2:22 a.m. - water line repaired, but boil water advisory in effect  
 August 24 at 11:59 a.m. - road repaired  
 August 25 at 1:50 p.m. - boiled water advisory lifted for everyone, but the River Bend Community due to a water leak on August 24  
 August 26 at 12:40 p.m. boil water advisory lifted for River Bend

On Thursday, August 29, the Town of Granite Falls issued the following news release:

Granite Falls, North Carolina – The Town of Granite Falls extends its heartfelt thanks to all the individuals and organizations who played a crucial role in responding to and repairing the large water main break last week.

On August 23, 2024, at approximately 1:30 pm, the Town was made aware of a water leak on US Highway 321 just north of Walmart. Granite Falls utility crews responded immediately and began excavating the broken line. Shortly after the news of the break spread, the City of Lenoir, Caldwell County, the Town of Sawmills, the Town of Maiden, and the Town of Rhodhiss reached out to Granite Falls to offer assistance.

Following the initial repair of the water main, as crews from the North Carolina Department of Transportation were preparing to patch and reopen US 321, the line broke again. Several of the initial responding staff members and

neighboring agencies were on their way home but immediately returned to the site to complete additional repairs.

The Town is especially thankful to its dedicated staff in its Water and Wastewater Department, Street, Electric, Police, and Fire Departments, the Water Treatment Plant, and the Utility Customer Service Representatives. The Town is grateful for the outpouring of supports from other agencies and partners including Barry Calloway and his team from Caldwell County Water, Caldwell County Emergency Management, City of Lenoir Water Department, North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 11, and Chad Sigmon Construction. All the individuals and agencies involved made the repairs as quickly and efficiently as possible, without any injuries to the crew members.

Lastly, the Town would like to extend its sincere thanks and gratitude to the citizens of Granite Falls for their patience and understanding of this difficult situation. Your support and adherence to the various advisories issued by the Town were essential in managing this situation. The Town is proud of this collaborative effort demonstrated by all parties involved and appreciates the community's resilience and cooperation. (source: Town of Granite Falls news release sent out by Kara Calloway)



ElectriCities CEO Roy Jones (left) and Former Town Manager Linda Story are pictured at the ElectriCities Annual Conference on August 14 in Asheville, NC

**Linda K. Story  
Lifetime  
Achievement  
Award**

The Town of Granite Falls is pleased to announce that Linda Story, our former Town Manager, has been awarded the Public Power Lifetime Achievement Award

at the 2024 ElectriCities Annual Conference. This award recognizes Linda's significant contributions to public power and her many years of dedicated service to our community. Linda Story began her career with the Town as the Town Clerk before becoming the Interim Town Manager in 1981 and then the full-time Town Manager in 1982. She was one of the first female managers in North Carolina and led Granite Falls for over 27 years until her retirement in 2009. During her tenure, Linda was instrumental in securing approximately \$10 million in grant funds, significantly enhancing Town services and ensuring high-quality services for our residents. Under her leadership, the Town successfully navigated various challenges from infrastructure improvements to economic development initiatives. Linda worked closely with Town employees, council members, and residents to address their concerns and promote the Town's interests. The Town of Granite Falls congratulates Linda Story on receiving the Public Power Lifetime Achievement Award. Her contributions have had a lasting impact on our community, and her dedication to public service is greatly appreciated. (source: Town Newsletter for September 2024)

**MAKING GOOD NEWS**  
*Madison Bumgarner*

On August 1, 2024, Tony Kornheiser and Michael Wilbon wished Madison Bumgarner, a Happy 35th Birthday during their show, *Pardon the Interruption*. They noted that he had not played in the MLB since being released by the Arizona Diamondbacks in 2023. After giving the statistics that led to his departure from the team, they recalled his accomplishments with the San Francisco Giants, where he led the team to three World Series championships and earned Most Valuable Player in 2014. Despite Madison's disappointing performance with the Diamondbacks, Wilbon expressed his belief that the pitcher had earned the right to be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Prior to being drafted by the San Francisco Giants, Mad Bum helped South Caldwell High School win the 2007 4A State Championship.



Photo by Kim Davis

**RAINBOW BEFORE THE STORM**  
*Debby on the Way*

On Wednesday, August 7, a beautiful rainbow appeared over the William B. Shuford Recreation Center as members of Mount Zion Baptist Church in Sawmills were enjoying a pool party finale to their 2024 Vacation Bible School. While they were swimming, sunshine and a light shower met to produce a symbol of God's Promise as recorded in Genesis 9:12-17. The rainbow preceded heavy rains that fell the next day - remnants from Debby, a tropical storm which had briefly been a hurricane on August 5. Debby wracked havoc in Florida, Georgia, and on the Carolina coasts with flooding and tornadoes before bringing heavy rain to our area on August 8. One local resident recorded 3.4 inches.



*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 February 18, 2007. Visit us on Facebook under "Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum." Our website is [www.granitefallshistorymuseum.org](http://www.granitefallshistorymuseum.org).

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**UPDATE ON NEW HISTORY BOOK**  
*Bad News, Good News*



Dear Readers,

First, I have some bad news. I had hoped to announce the publication of *Dateline: Granite Falls, North Carolina* in this newsletter, but using puns reminiscent of the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum, I have encountered numerous "roadblocks, detours, and long waits for red lights to turn green." The good news is that I have completed a chronological history of Granite Falls from 1999 through July 2024 along with a summary of the years 1752 through 1998 (years covered by *Etched in Granite: the History of Granite Falls, North Carolina*). I have also collected a good number of oral histories, but we could use more.

While I have had time to record history, congested traffic (can't resist the puns) in the form of other obligations has competed for the time and energy I need to ensure an accident free journey to publication. I am happy to report that Peggy Poe and Renae Winkler have inspected my work, and I have begun making repairs. Normally, time travel is risky, but I have successfully changed mistakes I made between 1752 and 2010.

We are getting close to our destination. Barring any unforeseen road closures or traffic accidents, we can arrive in style with a history book we will treasure for years to come. Since there are only four (4) months left in 2024, I think it makes sense to finish out the year and aim for publication during the first quarter of 2025. This will not only allow us time to safely reach our destination, but it will also give the public more time to submit their news stories and oral histories. I urge individuals, churches, civic clubs, businesses, schools, and other groups to join my journey down memory lane. We don't want to leave you behind. My contact information is parked in the "gravel" area below. Let me know if you have questions or need roadside assistance. Thank you.

Linda Richards Crowder