

MAKING HISTORY COVID-19

According to various news accounts, the first reported case of COVID-19 in North Carolina was on March 3, 2020. The first reported death in the state from the virus was March 24, 2020. On March 26, 2021, the website of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Resources showed 905,528 reported cases and 12,028 deaths due to the virus since COVID-19 first appeared in our state. The peak in new cases was on January 9, 2021 with 11,581. However, late reporting of cases made the totals for 2/3/2021 artificially high at 12,079. The true peak came about two weeks after the last holiday (New Year's), giving credence to the contention that gatherings fueled the spread of the virus.

The FDA approved the emergency use of the single shot Johnson and Johnson vaccine on February 27th, thereby increasing the amount of vaccine available. This vaccine does not require super cold storage, making it valuable in areas without the proper refrigeration. Vaccinations have been available in Caldwell County at the Health Department and Robbins Medical Park across from Caldwell Memorial Hospital. Residents are allowed to go across county lines to get the vaccine.

On March 2, 2021, Governor Roy Cooper announced that persons in Group 4 with medical conditions that put them at risk for the virus along with persons who lived in certain group settings could begin receiving the vaccine on March 24th. On March 11th, he changed the date to March 17th and announced that certain essential workers could begin receiving the vaccine on April 7th.

Being vaccinated does not free people from wearing masks, social distancing, and washing their hands. According to the CDC website on March 17, 2021, vaccinated persons can visit indoors with other vaccinated persons without wearing masks, and they can visit without masks indoors with unvaccinated people from one other household indoors as long as none of them has a high risk for serious illness. Persons who had been vaccinated don't have to be tested or quarantined if they are around someone with

(COVID-19 continued on page 2)



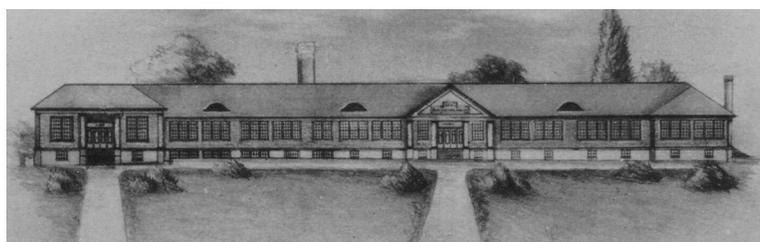
Granite Falls High School Built in 1902 for grades 1 - 10

OH MOTHER OF OUR LEARNING, *Long May Thy Presence Be*

The Granite Falls Historical Association is seeking photos that show life on Schoolhouse Hill, the current site of Granite Falls Middle School, to exhibit at the museum and to feature in a special section in the update to *Etched in Granite*. They want scenes that will inspire GFMS students by featuring historic events, people who used to attend school there, and changes made over the years (architecture, furnishings, equipment, hair styles, clothing, etc.)

The Association has access to all of the high school annuals (1947 - 1977) as well as photos that were featured in the original *Etched in Granite*, but these sources do not tell the whole story. They are missing photos from Granite Falls Middle School yearbooks from 1978 through the present along with photos made at the 1935 building before 1947 when the school published its first annual. If you have photos that meet these needs, please contact Linda Crowder by phone at 828-396-1066 or by email (ldrcrowder@gmail.com). She can scan and return original photos to the owner.

Architect's Rendering of the 1935 High School Building
Can you spot the differences between the proposed drawing and the actual building?



COVID unless they have symptoms or live in a group setting. The CDC emphasized they were still learning about the vaccines and what they can and cannot do to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The decrease in new cases, hospitalizations, and deaths led Governor Cooper to issue Executive Order #195 on February 24th, effective February 26th that lessened some restrictions he had placed in 2020 and extended in 2021. Changes include lifting the 10 p.m. to 5 p.m. curfew and no longer requiring businesses to have someone stationed at their doors to monitor face coverings. In addition, onsite consumption of alcohol could continue until 11 p.m. (up from 9 p.m.) EO #195 also increased the general limit on indoor mass gatherings from 10 to 25 with fitness centers, museums, personal care facilities, retail stores, and restaurants being able to open at 50% capacity while bars, movie theaters, conference centers, and entertainment venues open at 30% capacity. The general outdoor mass gathering was 50 persons with exceptions for large venues.



Retail and personal care businesses could have 100% occupancy as of March 26th at 5 p.m.

personal care facilities were back to 100% capacity along with outdoor restaurants, fitness centers, and amusement parks. The capacity for indoor restaurants, amusements parks, fitness/activity centers, and pools increased to 75%. Other venues such as movies, bars, lounges, meeting spaces, and conference centers were allowed 50% capacity. He also rescinded the ban on the late night sale of alcoholic beverages.

On March 25th, Governor Cooper held a press conference to announce that vaccinations would be open to everyone else in Group 4 on March 31st and to all adults on April 7th.

On March 10, 2021, Dr. Mandy Cohen, Secretary of Health and Human Services, issued Secretariat Order # 9 that rescinded previous orders she had issued in 2020 that limited visitation in long term care facilities.

COVID-19 Cluster in Granite Falls: On February

22nd, the *Caldwell Journal* reported that a cluster of coronavirus cases had occurred at Hickory Falls Health and Rehabilitation during January affecting 49 members of the staff and 102 patients. This was the second outbreak at the facility, which was licensed for 120 beds. It was over before the report made the news.

Testing: An overall decrease in COVID-19 cases meant that the county no longer needed the drive thru testing clinic in Lenoir. Caldwell UNC Health Care (aka Caldwell Memorial Hospital) announced that it would close the drive-thru set up in front of Quest4Life at the end of March, one year after it was set up. A similar site in Granite Falls operated from June 2020 until late February 2021. After the drive-thru closes, persons can be tested at urgent care centers (Robbins Medical Park, Blowing Rock, RiverCrest, and Falls Pediatrics). (source: *Lenoir News-Topic*, Thursday, March 18, 2021, page A1 and A4.)

Caldwell County Schools: When schools reopen on April 12th following spring break, all students except those enrolled in Caldwell Connect (the all virtual learning plan) will return to school four days per week under Plan A. Wednesday will be a remote learning day for everyone.

Homecoming: South Caldwell High School was able to hold Homecoming, an event that usually take place in the fall, on Friday, March 12th. Emma Grace Hiatt was Homecoming Queen, and the Maid of Honor was Sarah Bentley.

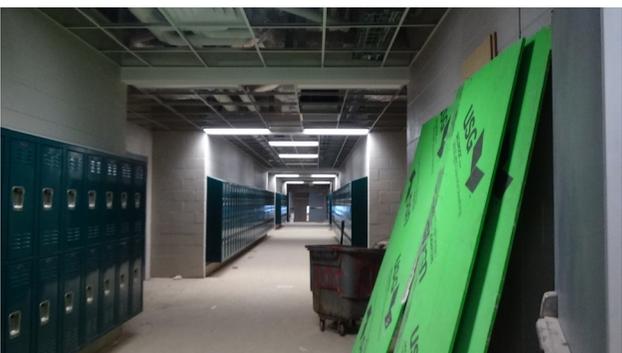
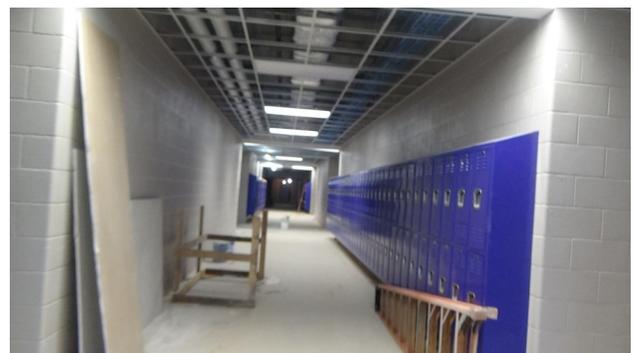
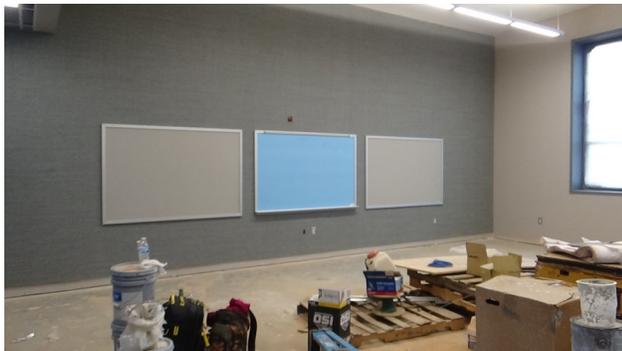
Museum: Since the executive orders issued on February 24th and March 23rd lessened the restrictions for the reopening of museums, the town has begun making preparations to reopen the Granite Falls



History and Transportation Museum. While checking to see what would be needed to reopen, members of the History Committee noted some concerns about the condition of the building and the exhibits. The museum is located in the second oldest residence in Caldwell County (built in the 1790s), and buildings with a little age on them require extra care and attention. After the town completes these maintenance projects, the History Committee can resume accessioning new acquisitions, putting them on display, and making sure the museum is ready for visitors before announcing reopening plans. In the meantime, the Committee is looking for people to serve at the museum when it is open. Volunteers serve one two-hour session each quarter. The work consists of opening/closing the museum and assisting visitors as needed. New volunteers will work with someone who is experienced until they feel comfortable serving alone. If you would like to volunteer, please call the town office at 396-3131.

KEEPING THE PORTALS WIDE
Inside the New GFMS
February 15, 2021

If all goes as planned, the new building will be ready for occupancy mid-April 2021.



GRANITE FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL ON MARCH 7, 2021

We'll Pray to Keep Thy Portals Wide for All Posterity



Tablet II is a publication of the Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc. The purpose of the publication is to provide members with news and information about the Association along with articles and photos of historical interest. The purpose of the Association is to preserve and interpret the history/heritage of Granite Falls and Southern Caldwell County by historical preservation, publications, active museum and historical site programs, public meetings, and various activities related to these programs.

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For more information about the Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc and the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum, go to the website - www.granitefallshistorymuseum.org or the Facebook page under "Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum."