

# The Quill



T H E C H E A T H A M C O U N T Y A R C H I V E S N E W S L E T T E R

## CITIZEN SPOTLIGHT ~ CHARMAINE COCHRAN JAMIESON



Leta Charmaine Cochran  
"In the game of life, she will be team captain."

This edition of The Quill is dedicated to one of the Cheatham County Archives' most ardent supporters, Charmaine Cochran Jamieson.

Charmaine has a great interest in the history of Cheatham County. She grew up in the East Cheatham community. She graduated from Cheatham County Central High School in 1967. She was a member of the basketball team and participated in many school activities.

She would graduate from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville after completing high school.

Charmaine saw the need for a county archives for many years. She participated in the Cheatham County Historical Society during the years prior to the archives being established.

Weekly, she volunteered in the CCHGA office and county museum with Janet Wood and Clayton Walden. Their conversations would often turn to the locked, debris filled room adjoining the museum.

The room contained many of the county's historical books and records. Charmaine would often comment on the need to organize and clean the room and have an operational archives.

During this period, she attended and graduated from the Tennessee State Library and Archives Institute. Her desire to see an archives established grew more as she progressed through the institute.

Charmaine's dream of a county archives was achieved in August 2019. the once dark, dirty room was now a functioning archives.

A passion for history and historic preservation led her to honor one of Cheatham County's first settlers, Adam Binkley.

Charmaine worked tirelessly researching the Binkley history and providing the funding needed for a monument.

The monument can be seen as one drives on Highway 49 and Golf Course Lane. It stands surrounded by an iron fence in a small, shady cemetery.

We are grateful to people such as Charmaine who have dedicated their lives and supported the preservation of history.

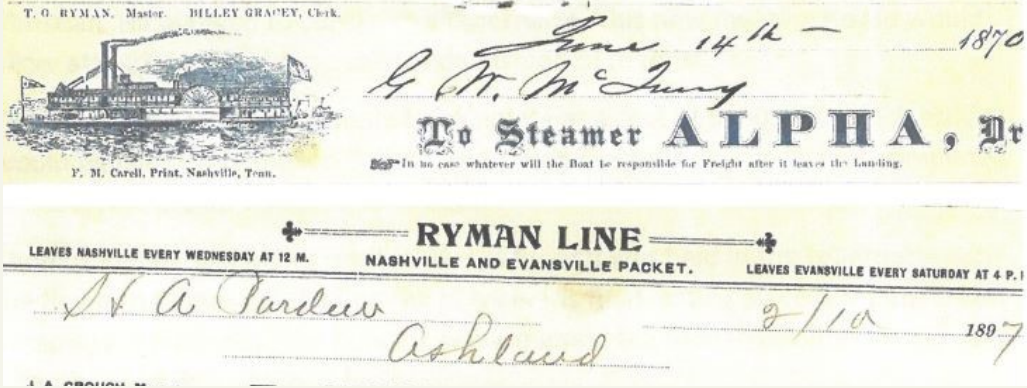
Thank you Charmaine for your support and friendship through the years.

~Walter Pitt, Archivist

# CAPTAIN RYMAN LETTERHEADS

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Letterheads representing the Ryman Line are featured in this edition of the newsletter. They are from the years 1870 and 1897. The ships of the Ryman line served Cheatham County as pivotal links to the world.

The steamer Alpha, pictured in the letterhead was Ryman’s first boat. He purchased it in 1867. it became the ship which launched a company which would make Captain Ryman a very wealthy man.

The Ryman Line was based in Nashville. It was formed in 1885. The line was a consolidated enterprise headed by Captain Thomas “Tom” Ryman (1841-1904). Prior to the establishment of the line, the riverboat company was an unconsolidated group of several steamboats.

Ryman also owned the largest saloon in Nashville. It sat on the waterfront of the Cumberland River. The saloon was very successful as were all of the other ventures in Ryman’s businesses.

In 1855, the world changed for Thomas Ryman. The Reverend Sam Jones held a tent revival meeting in Nashville. Sam Jones (1847-1906) was a businessman from Georgia. He was also a well-known Southern Methodist revivalist preacher. Jones emphasized the evils of alcohol and idleness in his sermons. He had been a brilliant lawyer, but also an alcoholic. He credits a miraculous conviction which led him to turn from alcohol to his faith.

Tom Ryman was not a believer. He attended the Reverend Jones’ meeting intent on heckling the Methodist preacher. Instead of heckling, Ryman became a devout Christian. He pledged to construct a tabernacle. This new meeting house would allow attendees to hold revivals inside instead of in tents.

The tabernacle took seven years to complete at a cost of \$100,000 which today would be over three million dollars. The Union Gospel Tabernacle was completed in 1892. It was over budget and in debt.

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## CAPTAIN RYMAN LETTERHEADS

*(Continued from page 2)***Captain Thomas "Tom" Ryman**

Thomas Ryman would live until 1904. His funeral was held in the tabernacle with the Reverend Jones conducting the service. His final resting place is Mount Olivet Cemetery in Nashville. The building was renamed the Ryman Auditorium not long after the Captain's death.

Sam Jones lived only two years longer than Ryman. He died after returning from a revival meeting. His body lay in state in the Georgia state capital and his home church in Cartersville was renamed in his honor. The family home, Roselawn, is now a museum featuring the life of Sam Jones and the history of the community.

The Ryman Auditorium today serves as a venue for all forms of entertainment. It has survived several attempts to destroy it. It serves as a testament to not only historic events, but also to Captain Tom Ryman and how his life was changed.

~Walter Pitt, Archivist

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 PRIVILEGE TAX BOOKS

The privilege tax books can often be overlooked when one is researching communities and family.

These books contain the names of businesses and their owners. They will often list the occupation of individuals. These books can provide the names of the first or some of the first people to provide a service to a community.

We feature the names of individuals who offered their services to the county in the late 1800s in this article.

During the late 1800s, photography was an emerging art form. Many small towns did not have their own professional photographers. They had to travel to larger cities often to have their photograph taken.

The privilege tax book from 1897 lists several people from Cheatham County who registered as photographers.

The first individual listed is A. J. Duke. Mr. Duke would pay \$2.50 for a three month license to be a photographer in 1897-98. J. B. Chapman would take a license for six months at \$5.00 and join A. J. Duke as a photographer in 1898. In 1899, W. M. Murrah and W. J. Hannah joined Duke and Chapman as photographers.

An undertaker is one of those occupations which seems to always be needed. Many of the county undertakers are listed in the book. Many communities had their own undertakers. They were often offered as services along with a merchant's store. The modern funeral home did not appear on the scene until years later. The ease of travel we experience today was not available 125 years ago.

E. W. Gupton, Webb and Heathman, R. C. Gupton, W. J. Bobbitt, S. W. Patterson and J. M. Duke are listed as receiving licenses to be undertakers from 1897-1899.

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## P R I V I L E G E T A X B O O K S

*(Continued from page 3)*

There are many more names and occupations listed in just this one book which covers the years 1897-1920.

The last item we will feature is the tax for passenger vehicles. One has to wonder if people used their new vehicles as sort of a taxi service. Motorized vehicles were slowly replacing the horse and carriage as the main mode of transportation at the turn of the century.

Those listed as paying \$3.00 for a six month license for a passenger vehicle in 1897 include: the Doubleday Brothers of Cheap Hill, W. N. Adkisson, W. F. Bracey, R. W. Young and A. W. Burns.

In the next newsletter, we will try to reveal some of the uncommon occupations which are revealed in the privilege tax books.

*~Walter Pitt, Archivist*



## R A D I O H A L L O F F A M E A N N O U N C E R

Every week day radio station WSM AM 650 would start the noon hour with "It's Noontime Neighbors." The host of Noontime Neighbors had a connection to Cheatham County.

The host of the daily midday program can be seen as one opens the first annual of Cheatham County Central High School. "The Bee" was published in 1944. Our subject's picture can be seen on page seven. He is a faculty member and his name was John McDonald.

Mr. McDonald was a West Tennessee Native. He served several years on the staff at CCCHS as the agriculture teacher. In 1944 he served as freshman sponsor.

After the 1943-1944 school year, Mr. McDonald accepted a new position. This position would be the agricultural director for WSM-AM 650 Radio. WSM was a clear channel, 50,000 watt station which reached several states and much of Tennessee.

He would present his farm reports on the morning "Walking Crew" program and then on his "Noontime Neighbors" program. He became known as America's best known farm director.

It was said that farmers within a 100 mile radius would plan their lunch around noon. They would leave their fields to listen to the program.

As the years passed, John McDonald continued the role of Agriculture Director at WSM. In 1956, he was elected as the president of NAFB, the National Association of Farm Broadcasters. He was elected to the NAFB Hall of Fame in 1992.

By the early 1970s, radio was changing. One of the victims of change was Noontime Neighbors. Mr. McDonald's air time was reduced as the changes came about. He retired in the mid 1970s.

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RADIO HALL OF FAME ANNOUNCER

(Continued from page 4)

John McDonald passed away in 1983. However, he would receive one more honor. Thirty-two years after his death, Mr. McDonald was elected to the Tennessee Radio Broadcasters Hall of Fame.

It was a fitting conclusion to the legacy of a man who did much to help promote agriculture in Tennessee and the South.

~Walter Pitt, Archivist

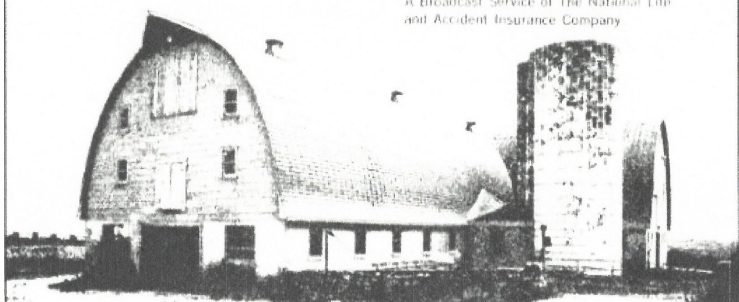


Southern agriculture trusts John MacDonald. From farmers on the back forty, through the entire gamut of state and federal farm officials, to the Secretary of Agriculture... they've been on his shows and they recognize him as a professional farm broadcaster. Nine of Big John's advertisers have been with him for over twenty years. They use his picture on prop materials, they use his voice and his endorsement for commercials, and they use him as a sounding board for new products.

Southern agriculture has an ear... and a spokesman... in John MacDonald, WSM's Farm Director since 1945.



A Broadcast Service of The National Life and Accident Insurance Company



## ASHLAND CITY TIMES AUGUST – OCTOBER 1954

### Looking back...



The opening of the new county fairgrounds and Cheatham Lock and Dam is dedicated in a busy fall of 1954. We look at the distant past in Cheatham County for August-October 1954.

August 1954 began with a bang in Cheatham County as Lock A was demolished in 15 seconds. A crowd estimated at 2,000 saw the old lock, built in 1904, blown up with 10,000 pounds of high explosives. The waters from the Cumberland River rose 300 feet in the air as the explosion took place. The detonation was delayed 45 minutes and occurred at 10:45 am instead of 10 am due to a passing train.

The results of the August election saw Charles Boyte elected County Court Clerk. Mr. Boyte replaced the retiring J. W. Caughron who served as clerk for 16 years. In other races, T. A. Turner and George Van Hook were elected County Register and Road Superintendent. Bruce Bradley was reelected Sheriff.

September saw the county prepare for the county fair. The fair would be held at the new fairgrounds south of Ashland City, September 9-11. The new exhibit building and animal barns are the features of the new fairgrounds. Officials expect the best fair in the event's history. The fairgrounds is still in use today as is the exhibit building.

The recently completed Cheatham Lock and Dam would hold its dedication ceremony September 18. Senator Albert Gore was the principal speaker. Numerous state, federal and county dignitaries also attended the ceremony. The lock and dam was named after Cheatham County and General Benjamin Franklin Cheatham. Mrs. Telfair Hobson of Sewanee, daughter of General Cheatham, Mary Fenton and Wickliffe Cheatham also attended representing the Cheatham family. General B. F. Cheatham commanded Company F during the Mexican War and served as a general in the Confederate Army during the War Between the States.

A freak automobile accident in the Mount Zion community occurred September 22. Tom Farley drove his car up a utility pole's guy wire. Mr. Farley had been helping Dudley Harris in Mr. Harris' tobacco field. As Mr. Farley left for the day he drove the car up the wire. The car crashed on top of Mr. Harris' car. The incident resulted in damage to the roof and doors of Mr. Harris' vehicle. Mr. Farley's car was not damaged. However, Mr. Farley did receive a broken arm.

As autumn progressed, Ashland City Mayor F. C. Stratton was faced with the dilemma of relocating the town dump. The neighbors of the current dump complained of the smell and of trash being dumped and blowing into their yards.

As October concluded a new dump site was located behind Sidney's Bluff. The new dump would be off of what is now River Road. Citizens would have the convenience of driving their vehicles to the edge of the ravine behind the bluff. They could then throw their trash down into the area below. The area was used as a dumping ground into the 1970s.

October concluded with the Central High School Fall Festival. The festivities were held in the high school gym. Earl Bradley and Patty Sue Lewis were crowned Harvest King and Queen.

~Walter Pitt, Archivist

## SUMMER IN THE CITY

As the hot, humid summer begins to wind down, my mind turns to the long ago time of being young in Ashland City.

The summer seemed to last forever then. It never seemed as hot and stifling when one was out on a bicycle or doing things a young person did.

My summers usually involved at least one bicycle ride to downtown Ashland City each week. That day usually included stops at local stores. We knew all of the owners then.

My adventure began on Smith Street, then to Elm and Bluff View Streets. I always tried to avoid the dogs which seemed to like to chase bicycles. Elizabeth Street was next.

I traveled by the school and Board of Education to town. The first stop was usually Tucker's Grocery. Butch Tucker, Snookie Hallums, Carney Winters and Marian Fizer were among those who knew me.

Once in a while and if I had money, I would cross Main to the Dairy Dip. It was Robbie's then and later became Stratton's.

Puzzle Fool Creek was always a must stop. In the 1960s and 1970s it was between Balthrop Motors and Shelton Harrison Chevrolet. My parents bought many a car at Balthrop's. It was a Plymouth, Chrysler, Dodge dealership.

The new cars at the dealers did not interest me. The fish in the creek always were of interest. Puzzle Fool had some large fish in the pool at the opening of the culvert where it crossed Main Street. Everyone always had to stop to see the fish. They were a favorite attraction of the town.

The culvert, which was replaced in past few years, was built in the 1930s. It was constructed with convict labor. The inside of the culvert was dark, slimy and wet. It was a concrete structure. Newspapers from the 1930s were plastered on the walls. We always tried to read some of the newspaper when we dared go inside the culvert.

Traveling north on Main Street, a stop at Boyd's Grocery for an ICEE might be on the agenda if there was money in my pocket. If there were no coins on me, I would continue up the street.

Pushing my bicycle on the sidewalks, the smell of leather and other shoe related materials would come from the open doors of Shiver's Shoe Shop. Crossing the alley there was the old post office and garage. These structures met a violent, tragic fate in the early 1970s. A truck without brakes barreled into the buildings.

The next three store fronts included the wishy-washy laundromat, the Klondike Café and Sam Reeks Store.

The Klondike is where Mr. Palmer Smith and I would go after his trip to the Miller and Harris Barber Shop on Cumberland Street.

Sam Reeks is where I had to go for school clothes every August. Sam Reeks Jr., Anthony Fizer and Huffman Morse were usually there manning the store.

As the trip concluded, I would stop at the Dime Store on Cumberland Street. Mr. Malcolm Lewis and his wife owned the store. It always had a wonderful selection of items to stir the interest of a child. I also enjoyed visiting with Miss Vivian Hudgens who worked there. She always took time to be friendly and nice to anyone.

The time had arrived to journey home. The route back was across the little bridge over Puzzle Fool and through what we referred to as the "bottom." This was the school grounds area by the creek where many activities were held during school.

As I rode past the football field and through the school grounds, I never thought that I would shortly be back there in classes. I cycled down Elizabeth Street past century old oak trees and past the Acme Boot factory. I was half way home.

True's Market sometimes was the last stop before crossing busy Main Street. True's had a walk in cooler with cold drinks. Most of the time I did not buy a drink unless my brother Paul was there to make the purchase. However, it felt good to walk into the cool air of the large cooler.

Crossing the highway onto Elm Street, led me to Smith Street and home. The day was concluded and another day of summertime in the city, Ashland City, was over.

~Walter Pitt, Archivist

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CCTNARCHIVES.OMEKA.NET

## CHEATHAM COUNTY ARCHIVES

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The Cheatham County Archives houses, maintains, & provides public access to County Government records and historical documents; and serves as the primary repository for these records.

It is the mission of the Cheatham County Archives to support and provide public access to County Government records in our custody and control.

We have a vision of promoting innovative approaches to historical preservation and research.

We desire to expand the accessibility of historic resources to the community.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

1970s photograph of Mrs. Joyce Mayo and students rehearsing a play production at Cheatham County Central High School. The little theatre is named in her honor. More theatre photographs from CCHS can be viewed in "The Joyce Mayo Theatre Collections" on our website.

