

THE CAMPAIGN TO

# BUILD HISTORY

The  
Cherokee  
County

Center



HISTORY<sup>IN THE</sup>  
MAKING



### *A Letter from the Campaign Co-Chairs*

Cherokee County has an important story to share. Our County's rich history spans from the earliest Native American inhabitants, to its days as a Cherokee territory, to the glittering Gold Rush era and the first settlers; from the conflict of the Civil War to the Industrial Revolution, and the mill towns, marble industry and poultry businesses, all of it culminating in the vibrant community that is today's Cherokee County.

Cherokee County's past is a microcosm of America's History, worthy of preserving to ensure a legacy that educates, inspires and endures. By recognizing the value and lessons of our shared past, our community is better prepared to deal with future challenges.

Today, the Cherokee County Historical Society is at the most important moment in its 45-year existence—one in which the right leadership, resources and support have converged to create an unprecedented opportunity to honor, protect and celebrate our local history at the level it deserves. Our community continues to grow and thrive and, as it does, **we must address the threat** to our historical artifacts, records and structures and scale up our ability to protect and preserve them for future generations.

The high level of interest in Cherokee County history, combined with the threat of losing Cherokee's large number of historic sites, structures, and artifacts highlights the greatest challenge facing the Historical Society: **Protecting and preserving Cherokee County historical assets through education, advocacy and preservation.**

As advocates for sharing and preserving Cherokee County's history, we are **excited to announce the launch of the *History in the Making* Campaign** to fund a new History Center in Cherokee County!

The Cherokee County History Center will serve as a state-of-the-art, regional tourist destination as well as a headquarters from which the Society will lead local historic preservation efforts. **When fully operational, the History Center will welcome an estimated 20,000 visitors a year who will engage with new museum exhibits, experience a wider offering of quality programming and utilize its high-quality research resources.**

When complete, the History Center will fulfill its goals of becoming:

GOAL 1: An Exceptional Cultural Asset

GOAL 2: A Dynamic Education Resource

GOAL 3: An Economic Development Driver

We have a great plan, and now we need to come together to bring it to life. **In the next few pages, we set forth the vision for our permanent home.** To be successful, we must have the support of families, foundations, individuals and businesses that share our interest in preserving Cherokee County's past for current and future generations.

We believe that history unites us all, and we invite you to join us by supporting the *History in the Making* Campaign to **build a History Center of which we can all be proud.**



*Rebecca Johnston*  
Rebecca Johnston,  
Author and Past Cherokee Tribune Editor



*Skip Spears*  
Skip Spears,  
Bogwell + Spears



# The Cherokee County Historical Society

## PROTECTING A LEGACY FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

Founded in 1975, the Cherokee County Historical Society collects, preserves, and interprets all aspects of the County's history. The Historical Society's mission is to enhance the quality of life of the residents of Cherokee County and the region through education about its history and advocacy for the preservation of its artifacts, historic sites and structures.

In 2011, the Historical Society opened a small Cherokee County History Museum and Visitors Center in a temporary space at the Historic Courthouse in Canton. The Museum, which also served as a research facility that was open to the public, provided an overview of Cherokee County history with a limited number of artifacts, photographs and interactive iPad presentations, and limited space for exhibits and educational programs.

Over the course of its 45-year lifespan, the Historical Society has led numerous grassroots campaigns, including more than a dozen public campaigns to save structures of significant historic value and countless smaller efforts throughout the County. Through these and its other activities, the Historical Society has accomplished a great deal, including:

### Artifact Acquisition

- 120,000 Items in archival collection
- 82,431 Photographs collected
- 5,168 Prehistoric artifacts acquired

### Museum Visitors

- 22,650 Museum visitors (since 2011)
- 5,000 Students welcomed (since 2011)
- 650 Members (an 84% increase in the past 15 years)



### Advocacy/Preservation

- 350 Historical property owners assisted
- 98 Preservation awards presented to outstanding preservation projects in the community
- 10 Books published

### Achievements

- 5 State Excellence Awards from the Georgia Historical Society and the Georgia Historical Advisory Records Board for excellence in exhibits and collection management
- 3 times the annual financial support from public and private sector donors compared to 15 years ago



# Needs and Opportunities

The plan to create the Cherokee County History Center comes at a time of great need and great opportunity.

- **The need to preserve local history.** Cherokee County has been enjoying economic prosperity and rapid development and, as a result, local historical buildings are continually at risk. The Historical Society must expand its resources and scale up its ability to preserve and protect what makes our community special and unique, including the many thousands of artifacts, sites and structures that connect Cherokee County to its past.
- **The opportunity to celebrate and strengthen the Cherokee County community.** History is the unifying thread of any community, providing a sense of place and a point of pride as it ties together the past, present and future. At a time when shared in-person experiences are increasingly rare, the History Center provides an opportunity to enrich the community through experiences that all people can appreciate, both those who lived, worked and grew up in Cherokee and those who are new to our community.
- **The opportunity to expand outreach.** The preservation of history relies on each generation's ability to instill the same level of historical appreciation in the ones that follow. To that end, the Society must expand its programming and engagement with educational institutions at every level and establish a cultural asset that will draw larger numbers of visitors, members, supporters and researchers, of all ages.
- **The opportunity to expand the cultural offerings of Cherokee County.** The History Center will be a catalyst for tourism in Cherokee County and will serve to create better, more engaged citizens. With an expected visitation rate of 20,000 people per year, the Center will become an asset that will help attract new businesses, talent and visitors to the County, complementing Cherokee's existing portfolio of cultural attractions and events.
- **The need for financial sustainability.** The creation of a state-of-the art history center will support the implementation of admission fees, a broader program of events and new opportunities to establish additional revenue streams. The resulting combination of increased visitor traffic, membership growth and financial support (through greater access to endowments, foundations, donors and corporate support) will set the History Center on course for long-term success.

**"History is a guide to navigation in perilous times.  
History is who we are and why we are the way we are."**

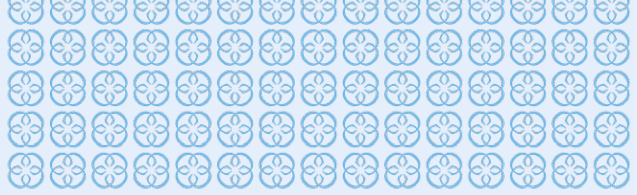
**– David McCullough, *Historian and Author***

These needs and opportunities have informed the future vision for the Cherokee County Historical Society – a plan that will take the organization to the next level by establishing a modern, dynamic and multi-functional "center" of operations.

The new History Center will allow our community to seize the opportunity to protect, preserve and advocate for the value of Cherokee County's unique and compelling history.







## The Cherokee County History Center Project

In Summer 2019, the Historical Society purchased the former Canton Police Station building located on East Marietta Street, and, after conducting a funding feasibility study, the Board of Directors and staff agreed to initiate this capital campaign to fund the build-out of the new History Center.

As downtown Canton and the entire County continue to grow and experience significant residential and commercial development, now is the time to invest in and celebrate Cherokee County's history and build upon the Historical Society's success by creating a state-of-the-art space to engage visitors and residents. The new History Center will feature:

- **740% increase in exhibit space** from 675 square feet to at least 5,000 square feet
- **Large projection wall** featuring videos chronicling the history and development of the County
- **Tabletop touchscreens** allowing visitors to explore topics in great detail
- **Large-scale installations** highlighting work and home life in Cherokee County over the centuries
- **Educator-friendly resources**, including an instructional guide with teaching standards
- **Interactive children's activities**, where children experience history hands-on
- **Expanded storage space** with state-of-the-art preservation conditions

## The Three-Goal Project

In support of the mission of the Cherokee County Historical Society, the completed Cherokee County History Center will achieve the following three goals of becoming:

### GOAL 1

**An Exceptional Cultural Asset**

### GOAL 2

**A Dynamic Education Resource**

### GOAL 3

**An Economic Development Driver**



*Future home of the Cherokee County History Center.*

**"There may have been a time when preservation was about saving old buildings here and there, but those days are gone. Preservation is in the business of saving communities and the values they embody."**

**– Richard Moe,  
National Trust for Historic Preservation**



## GOAL 1

### An Exceptional Cultural Asset

*Create a new, state-of-the-art history center that serves as a dynamic cultural destination with engaging exhibits, a headquarters for expanded preservation advocacy, and a facility for state-of-the-art collection storage.*



## SUMMARY

The Historical Society intends to provide significantly greater access to residents, tourists, researchers, and other stakeholders through an expanded facility and accompanying expanded programming.

The vision to establish an exceptional cultural asset for the region will be realized through the achievement of three strategic objectives: *Engaging Exhibits*, *Expanded Preservation Advocacy*, and *Enhanced Collection Storage*.





## Engaging Exhibits

A showcase for stunning, multi-sensory exhibits that immerse visitors in Cherokee County's past and engage visitors of all ages, from the County, the region and beyond.

The History Center will provide the required space to display the Historical Society's extensive collection of artifacts of our past and interpret and reveal their significance through a variety of mediums to visitors of all ages. The Center will trace Cherokee County's history from the earliest days of prehistory and prehistoric inhabitants to modern times.



### ACTION PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE:

- Develop permanent exhibits utilizing the extensive existing collections of the Historical Society and acquire new objects, as needed, to engage and inspire visitors.
- Create, as a centerpiece of the History Center, an oversized projection wall featuring videos chronicling the history and physical development of the County, which can be explored in more detail via adjacent interactive tablets.
- Share personal stories of Cherokee County people from all eras of history, including those like Little Fourkiller, a Cherokee native sent on the Trail of Tears, or Magnolia Thomas, a Spelman graduate and former teacher in Woodstock during segregation.
- Construct large-scale immersive exhibits like a recreated mill village street with housing.
- Showcase the County's rich mineral history, including gold and marble.
- Provide visitors with self-service interpretative resources using installed tablet apps and audio narratives.
- Create compelling temporary exhibits to drive attendance during peak periods to reach a larger, more diverse audience.

## Expanded Preservation Advocacy

Expand heritage preservation advocacy consistent with priorities expressed by Cherokee County residents.

The History Center will allow the Historical Society to improve and expand upon existing historic preservation efforts, particularly at this critical juncture when increasing building and land development threatens Cherokee County's historic assets and resources. County residents have been vocal about the need for historic preservation activities and have provided their feedback for the Cherokee County 2018 Comprehensive Plan. Of the Cherokee County residents polled, the top two priorities were "preserving the County's natural resources" and "preserving the County's sense of place and historic character." A total of 94.7% of those polled ranked historic preservation initiatives as "extremely important" or "somewhat important."

### ACTION PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE:

- Proactively communicate preservation and conservation incentives through workshops, direct mail, and onsite visits.
- Monitor upcoming development and work with local governments to target land desirable for conservation, walking trails or parkland.
- Increase resources, including staff who can concentrate on preservation issues and identify opportunities to repurpose historic buildings.
- Publish and offer brochures outlining tax benefits and incentives for historic structures for governmental entities to distribute to applicants seeking permits for building renovation or demolition.
- Partner with other preservation organizations such as the Upper Etowah River Alliance and Coosa River Basin Initiative to educate and advocate for the preservation of historic sites such as scenic vistas, farmland, fish weirs and important archaeological locations.



**"To communicate the truths of history is an act of hope for the future."**

*– Daisaku Ikeda, Philosopher, Educator and Author*

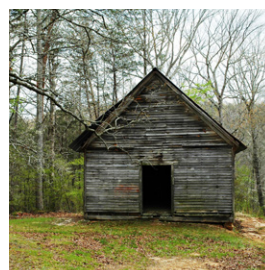
## Enhanced Collection Storage

A protected environment with greater capacity to appropriately store and display the items in the Historical Society collection.

The Historical Society has been the primary repository for objects, photographs, documents and books related to the County's history for the past 45 years. The History Center will provide a well-designed, climate-controlled environment for the 120,000+ items in the Historical Society's collections, ensuring their continued availability for future generations.

### ACTION PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE:

- Build a collection space that provides a climate-controlled, protected environment and access for visitors and researchers.
- Partner with local governments, residents and nonprofits to secure important items not currently in climate-controlled, protected storage.





## GOAL 2

### A Dynamic Education Resource

Create an educational resource that expands upon existing school curricula and enriches visitors' historical knowledge of Cherokee County and the United States.



"The school district is very excited about the development of a local history center. Cherokee County has a rich and interesting heritage, and we believe this center will provide great learning opportunities not only for our students, but the entire community."

— Dr. Brian Hightower, Cherokee County Superintendent of Schools

## SUMMARY

The Historical Society seeks to elevate its role as an educational resource by expanding its collaboration with educational institutions (including Cherokee County Schools) and providing a richer, more engaging visitor experience through its programming and exhibits.

This goal will be realized through the achievement of three strategic objectives: *Enriching School Resources*, *Comprehensive Programming* and *Expanded Research Resources*.



## Enriching School Resources

Partner with Cherokee County Schools, Reinhardt University and Chattahoochee Technical College to create educational resources that meet teaching standards and provide a fun, interactive learning experience.

Continuing the Historical Society's long partnership with the Cherokee County school system is a priority. It is vital that the Society work closely with educators and museum professionals to ensure that students can link lessons from class to the stories told in the History Center, providing instructor guides with appropriate teaching standards.

### ACTION PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE:

- Collaborate with educators to create a space that inspires wonder and encourages learning for students.
- Provide instructional guides for teachers and develop teaching standards that illuminate the history featured in the History Center.
- Provide traveling history trunks and “in-school” field trips which take hands-on history into the schools so students and teachers who are unable to visit the museum can participate in our shared history.
- Hire professionals and train volunteers to offer guided tours of the History Center.
- Host workshops, summer camps, classes and lectures to continue educational partnerships outside of school hours and encourage parents to participate. The Historical Society will offer scholarships for low income students to allow all children access to camps and workshops.
- Partner with the Boys and Girls Club for periodic after-school programs for its members.



## Comprehensive Programming

Implement diverse programming that will help visitors better understand the scope of Cherokee County history.

A critical goal of the Historical Society is to provide diverse programming that will educate and entertain visitors of all ages. This programming will augment the permanent and temporary exhibitions, increase visitation, and help retain and grow Society membership.

### ACTION PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE:

- Build upon an already successful lecture series and create multi-level classes and workshops for participants of all ages and abilities.
- Create accessible spaces in the History Center for programming.
- Partner with community organizations and schools for programs and field trips.
- Enhance the use of social media and other aspects of the Center's digital strategy to promote a robust program schedule and encourage participation.





“Cherokee County’s rich history is a huge part of what makes it unique and great. As we inevitably grow and change, preserving that history is critical to retaining our special sense of place and the enriched quality of life it brings. Nothing could do more for that cause than a state-of-the-art history center in our county seat to record, display, and promote the amazing history of this entire great county.”

– Harry Johnston, *Cherokee County Commission Chair*

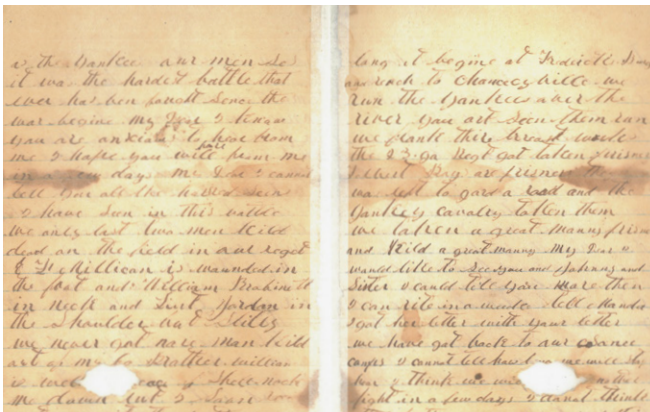
## Expanded Research Resources

Establish an expanded research facility that will accommodate researchers with diverse needs and provide expanded access to the resources in the collection.

Hundreds of researchers from all over the United States, including students, authors, and genealogists have utilized the resources available at the office of the Historical Society. The expanded research facility at the new History Center will have significantly more storage space and provide researchers with updated computers, an easy-to-use database of the collections, and additional resources such as finding aids to help researchers study and document history.

### ACTION PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE:

- Provide a dedicated and monitored area that will allow researchers to schedule access to artifacts and documents not currently available to the public.
- Design a research facility with multiple ways to conduct research, including the provision of access to the Historical Society collection, printed material, and digital assets.
- Partner with the ADA National Network with the goal of equal participation of all guests, including guests with disabilities.
- Offer ample space and oversized desks for researchers dealing with large collection items like maps.



“So much of our future is preserving our past.”

– Peter Westbrook,  
*Businessman and Olympic Medalist*

### GOAL 3

## An Economic Development Driver

*A regional tourist attraction that will support local economic growth and enhance Cherokee residents' quality of life.*



**“The History Center will enhance economic development, driving tourism to the area by providing a venue to share Cherokee’s unique past. As the fastest growing county in metro Atlanta, it is imperative that we embrace our history while working to stimulate jobs and grow the economy. This asset will also add to Cherokee’s attractiveness to employers and companies as they make decisions on where to locate.”**

**– Misti Martin, President, Cherokee Office of Economic Development**

### SUMMARY

It is well established that companies and employees want to locate in communities rich in cultural and recreational opportunities. Accordingly, the Historical Society has a role to play in supporting the efforts of the Cherokee Office of Economic Development and other economic development partners by creating the type of environment sought by talented workers and mobile companies that could locate anywhere.

The Historical Society also seeks to establish the History Center as a regional tourist attraction that delivers sustained economic benefits to the County by complementing and increasing awareness of Cherokee’s other assets/offerings and strengthening Cherokee’s brand as a destination and home. The goal of creating a driver of local economic development will be realized through the achievement of two strategic objectives: *Cultural Attraction* and *Sustained Financial Strength*.





## Cultural Attraction

Develop a quality regional attraction to enhance the quality of life for County residents and attract new residents, new businesses, and tourists.

The History Center will be a catalyst for tourism in Cherokee County and will serve to create better, more engaged citizens. With an expected visitation rate of 20,000 people per year, the Center will become an asset to attract new businesses, talent and visitors to the County. The Center will also include a gift shop and Visitors Center, offering information about other attractions and events in the area, that will be open to the public with no admission fee.

### ACTION PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE:

- Utilize a marketing strategy to position the History Center as a destination for the region.
- Seek accreditation through the American Association of Museums (AAM) and American Association for State and Local History (AASLH).
- Provide an open storefront gift shop at the History Center that will offer local products for sale as well as a Visitors Center.

## Sustained Financial Strength

Generate direct local sales tax revenue and indirect local economic activity while focusing on new revenue streams and cost-effective management.

The Society has a proven track record of fiscal responsibility and has developed multiple revenue streams to augment public sector support. Focusing on member/visitor development and long-range partnerships, the Society will hone its business model while contributing to local economic development and growth.

### ACTION PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE:

- Establish an admissions fee to provide an ongoing revenue stream from a larger visitor base.
- Implement strategic marketing and communications to grow and sustain the membership base.
- Increase gift shop retail sales and continue to maximize ancillary operations that will drive local tax revenue.
- Seek out new revenue streams such as special exhibit and program admission fees.

## Benefits of the New History Center

The Cherokee County History Center will provide educational, cultural, and economic benefits to thousands of citizens in Cherokee County and beyond.

### A Dynamic Cultural Asset

- The History Center will be a catalyst for tourism in Cherokee County, attracting visitors from around the region as it serves to create better, more engaged citizens.
- The History Center will include a gift shop and Visitors Center that will be open to the public with free admission and information about other attractions and events in the area.

### A Center for Lifelong Learning

- Cherokee County students and teachers will have access to immersive exhibits and a strong cultural resource to complement classroom instruction on local history.
- Researchers and historians from around the country will be able to expand their research efforts, increasing our knowledge of local history as they raise awareness of Cherokee County.
- Lifelong learners and history enthusiasts will have on-going opportunities to visit the History Center throughout the year to engage with permanent and temporary exhibits, and conduct their own genealogical and related recreational research.

### A New Economic Development Driver

- Businesses and the local economy will benefit from the growth in tourism and resulting increase in visitor spending and brand awareness of Cherokee County.
- Employers and residents will benefit from the enhanced quality of place resulting from this new cultural amenity, increasing Cherokee County's ability to attract prospective employees and companies considering relocation.

### A Financially Sustainable Local Enterprise

- The Society's move to a once-vacant building will generate new business activity and tax revenue as it adds to the cultural offerings of downtown Canton.
- The History Center will be an attractive cultural asset that will increase the organization's financial sustainability through expanded revenue streams, more memberships and greater operational efficiency.

## Naming Rights and Recognition Opportunities

The *History in the Making* Campaign offers lasting recognition for selected giving levels in the form of highly visible naming rights and recognition opportunities. **Your investment in the History Center can provide recognition and tribute to a family, individual, business, or foundation.**

Each investment will be recognized appropriately as determined by the investor/donor and the Historical Society. The Historical Society is pleased to provide a list of naming rights and recognition opportunities in a separate document.

Further, investors at selected levels will be recognized on the "Wall of Honor" in a prominent place in the new History Center.

## Project Budget

Renovation	\$980,000
Exhibit	\$500,000
Fundraising	\$200,000
Financing	\$135,000
Architectural & Engineering	\$125,000
Building Acquisition Costs	\$110,000
Contingency	\$100,000
Operational Impact	\$50,000
Total	\$2,200,000



# The Cherokee County Historical Society

## Board of Directors

Lisa Hillhouse Tressler  
*President*

Cory Wilson  
*Vice President*

Jeff Brown  
*Treasurer*

Carla Barnes  
*Secretary*

Joan Ahrens  
*Community Volunteer*

Kyle Bennett  
*City of Woodstock*

Chuck Douglas  
*City of Roswell*

Ann Fincher  
*Community Volunteer*

Mary Ann Hindman  
*Community Volunteer*

Rebecca Johnston  
*Retired, Cherokee Tribune*

Jon McDaniel  
*Retired, Southern Company*

Sally McPherson  
*USA Health Insurance*

Mark Moore  
*Cherokee Computer*

Jamie Morgan  
*Retired, Fireman's Fund Insurance*

Spencer Nix  
*Reformation Brewery*

Jane Shelnutt  
*Retired, Cherokee County Schools*

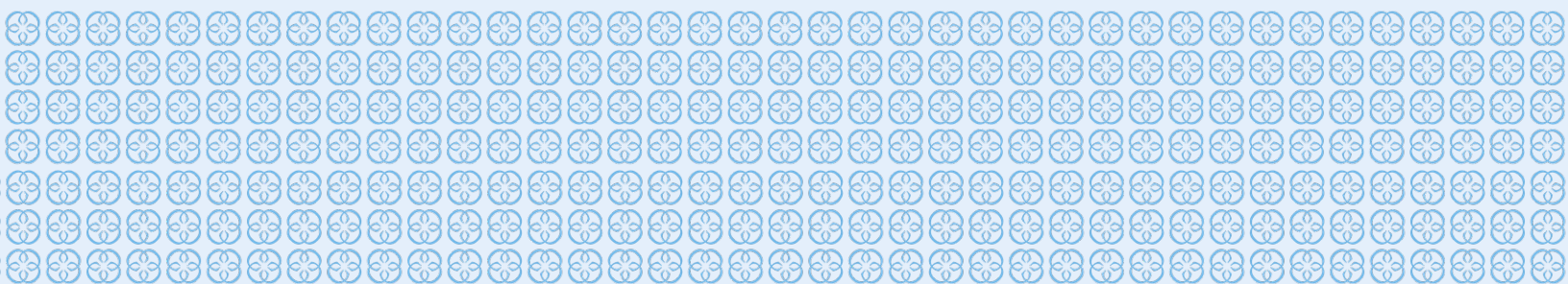
Joe Sellers  
*Atlanta Communities*

Lynne Harris Worthington  
*Community Volunteer*

Stefanie Joyner  
*CCHS Executive Director*



*The Campaign to Build the Cherokee County History Center*





# CHEROKEE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Donations: [rockbarn.org](http://rockbarn.org)  
PO BOX 1287 Canton, GA 30169