

*Abbeville County Historical Society
P.O. Box 12
305 North Main Street
Abbeville, South Carolina 29620*



Summer 2021

Dear ACHS Members:

I hope this letter finds you all well and enjoying the summer. We have a lot of exciting news and developments since my last newsletter in early spring 2021.

After many months of planning and web developing, we are finally ready to launch the Historic Abbeville Walking Tour. The new walking tour signs have been going up all over town the last couple of weeks and we still have a few more to go. The prior walking tour had 38 stops, while the new walking tour has 60 stops. We have had great feedback from the community on the design of the new signs. They are South Carolina Indigo Blue and White with the ACHS logo. Each visitor to Abbeville can pick up a walking tour map at the Welcome Center, City Hall and the Belmont Inn Hotel as well as other merchants and restaurants. Once a walker picks up his/her map, they can follow instructions on how to download the walking app on their phone. As each walker makes their journey to each stop, they will find a QR Code located on each sign that can be scanned with their phone. The QR Code will provide the history and importance of each stop. We are very excited about the launch of this app as it will help promote tourism in Abbeville while giving visitors a great history lesson on our town that can be accessed at any point and at any time.

We plan to launch the Historic Abbeville County Driving Tour in early 2022. The Historic Abbeville County Driving Tour will incorporate, Due West (Erskine College) Donalds, Lowdesville, Calhoun Falls, Cedar Springs and a few areas in Abbeville that are outside the walking path.

We are thrilled to announce that we have successfully moved the Harpers Ferry Cable Building from the Abbeville County Law Enforcement Center to the grounds of ACHS this past June. Each board on the building was numbered and disassembled. The building will be reconstructed on a concrete pad where the Harpers Ferry Bell currently resides between the McGowan House and the Caboose. The roof and back wall of the building had collapsed many years ago. Our plan is to put a new roof on the building but not to reconstruct the rear wall. That way the building can serve as a cover for the Harpers Ferry Bell while allowing visitors full access and view of the bell. Plans to reconstruct the Harpers Ferry Cable Building will begin late winter 2022. Please

see attached photo of the Harpers Ferry Cable Building and Well House. The building was first moved to the Abbeville County Library in the 1980's when the Savannah River was flooded. It was later moved to the Law Enforcement Center where it sat behind the complex for the last 30+ years.

We have made significant improvements with the Abbeville County Museum since taking over operations in May 2021. We were to assume operations in 2020, however, COVID-19 derailed those plans. ACHS is operating as a volunteer service to the County Museum until further plans can be made about a more permanent arrangement. Since May, the museum has been completely and professionally cleaned from the first floor to the third floor. We have also acquired many new artifacts and have many more being donated. The grounds have been completely cleared up, shrubs and trees cut back and all broken windows replaced. We are in the process of getting estimates to paint the inside, as well as the outside. The building was originally red when it was constructed in 1854. The plan is to paint the exterior in the original red provided we can come up with a preserved sample as we did on the McGowan House.

This past May, we began work on cleaning up the grounds around the Creswell Log Cabin that is located at the county museum. Part of the structure had collapsed on the left-hand side about 2-3 years ago. General Contractors of Abbeville and their crew removed the fence, overgrown brush and vines in May. About six weeks later the building further collapsed on the left-hand side as well as the entire roof. The good news is that most of the logs are still salvageable. We have hired Steven Marner along with his cousin and a four-man crew that will begin numbering every log and taking the building apart, log by log. We plan to start deconstruction of the building this month. The plan is to completely rebuild the cabin exactly as it originally was constructed.

We have a commitment from a local lumber mill that has offered to mill, replace and donate every log that cannot be salvaged. This is a huge break for us as the cost of materials were already going to be expensive even without the rising prices of lumber over the past year. We plan to use many old bricks from the McGowan House grounds to build a new foundation so there are no wood logs sitting on the ground and to replace the collapsed wood shingle roof with a new metal roof. The reason the building fell into decay was from the wood shingle roof leaking and causing the existing roof to collapse. We feel the only logical remedy is to build a new metal roof that will last at least 40 years before requiring any maintenance. The existing fireplace/chimney will not be removed or disassembled. It will be braced up and the cabin will be reconstructed back around the chimney and restored in place.

We have resumed tours of both the McGowan House and the Abbeville County Museum as of May, 1, 2021. The McGowan House is open every Saturday from 1-4pm and the Abbeville County Museum is open every Saturday from 11am to 3pm.

Now, for the not so good news. Part of the plaster ceiling collapsed in the Apothecary room last month in July. This is the third time this has happened in this room within the last few years. This is caused by extreme changes in temperatures and the second level of the house not having any source of heating or cooling. We installed a new HVAC system a few years ago on the main level and lower level of the house. Funds have not been available to install the second HVAC unit on the second floor. Cost of the second HVAC unit will run somewhere in the neighborhood

of \$25,000 per our last quote. With so many current projects that require funding, a new HVAC unit has not been a priority. We do have a crew coming in on Monday, August 9, 2021 to repair and replace the large hole in the ceiling. We are hopeful this repair will last until we can afford the additional unit.

The second of the not so good news is that we need a new roof on the McGowan House. The current roof was replaced about 35 years ago and has run its life. We have seen a number of increasing water leaks on the second level, most of them centralized at this time over the staircase. We have had about 4 estimates to date and we have decided to go with Adams & Coe Roofing out of Anderson. Adams & Co. had the best quote of any company that submitted a bid and their work references were outstanding that include John de la Howe among others. Our quote is for an architectural asphalt shingle roof with a 50 year lifetime. Cost of the new roof at quote was \$42,928.47. This quote is guaranteed to go up with the rising cost of materials. In addition, there is also a minimum \$15,000 in chimney repairs that must be done prior to the new roof. Some of the current roof damage has been caused by old bricks falling from the 4 chimneys.

Please check our website and/or our Facebook page for updates on all existing projects. You can also find information on the launch of the Historic Abbeville Walking Tour along with instructions on how to download the app.

On behalf of myself and the board of trustees of the Abbeville County Historical Society I would like to thank each and everyone one of you for your continued support and donations There is no way we could do any of the projects outlined with the gracious support of our members.

Best regards,

Andrew E Hartsfield, President





STOP #1

**ABBEVILLE OPERA HOUSE
ABBEVILLE CITY HALL**

CA. 1908

