

CASHIERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
presents a

# Symposium



Nineteenth Century  
**Plain-Style  
Furniture**

**May 30 & 31, 2008**  
Cullowhee \* Cashiers \* Highlands  
North Carolina

Single Bed crafted by Mordecai Zachary ca. 1852  
remains in his home in Cashiers, now known as the Zachary-Tolbert House

Register today for the  
**Plain-Style Furniture**  
Symposium  
May 30 & 31, 2008

## Calling All

Furniture Collectors, Antique Lovers  
and those wanting to learn more about  
19th Century Western North Carolina  
furniture, plan to attend the  
**Plain-Style Furniture Symposium**



### Collaborating Museums:

**Mountain Heritage Center**  
Western Carolina University  
Cullowhee, NC  
Dr. Scott Philyaw, Director  
Suzanne McDowell, Curator

**Fine Art Museum, Fine and  
Performing Arts Center**  
WCU, Cullowhee, NC  
Martin Dewitt, Director and Curator

**Zachary-Tolbert House**  
Cashiers, NC  
Tim Osment, Executive Director  
Susan Moody, Curator

**The Bascom**  
Highlands, NC  
Linda Steigleder, Executive Director  
Kaye Gorecki, Artistic Director

CASHIERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Post Office Box 104  
Cashiers, N.C. 28717



## Plain-Style Furniture

In the eighteenth century, “neat and plain style” described furniture that had a substantial quality but without patterning or ornamentation - thus Plain-Style as opposed to High Style. In 1983, with the Atlanta History Center exhibit *Neat Pieces, Plain-Style Furniture of 19th Century Georgia*, the term “Plain-Style” came into popular use. Other Southern states have followed with studies of their local furniture. Now Western North Carolina examines “Plain Style.” To set the stage we use the words of Wendall Garrett from the Forward of the 1983 *Neat Pieces* catalogue.

“The “plain folk of the Old South” lived in unpretentious wooden houses (on farms) and derived a sense of independence and self-respect from the ownership of land. They firmly believed that through toil and perseverance they could build their farms into plantations. . . Humorists have written vivid . . . accounts of these common people; their weddings and funerals, country dances and quilting bees, corn shuckings and log rollings, hunting and fishing, camp meetings and singing schools, mule swapping and grudge fights. They were men who worked hard, played hard, laughed loudly, and aspired to improve themselves both materially and spiritually. Household activities centered around the hearth, where the hardy farmer’s wife cooked a monotonous diet of hog and hominy, wove the cloth and made the family clothes, . . . raised chickens, tended the family vegetable garden, and even helped in the fields at harvest time.

The yeoman farmer was chronically short of money. Yet since he was engaged in more subsistence agriculture . . . he tended to be economically self-sufficient. . . . He furnished his home with furniture of local woods, sound construction, restrained decoration, and conservative style. . . . When viewed together their furniture adds up to a powerful statement of the vernacular tradition of cabinet making and chairmaking in rural America.”

## Agenda (subject to change)

### Friday, May 30, 2008

#### Mountain Heritage Center; Cullowhee

8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Registration

8:30 a.m. - Welcome and Opening of Exhibit

8:45 a.m. - 12:30 - Symposium

#### Center for the Fine and Performing Arts

12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Lunch catered by Annie’s

Naturally Cafe. Visit exhibit: *Trends in Contemporary Furniture from Appalachian Traditions*: Jerome Clark (Sylva) and John Gernandt

#### Farm Tour

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Carpool to Carol and Joe Doyle’s Big Ridge Farm to see Plain-Style furniture in its original setting. They have recently added another cabin (1790) and a one-room schoolhouse (1890). Also on Big Ridge collectors Martha and Thomas Black will open their beautifully restored farm house filled with interesting mountain pieces. In Glenville visit the home of Millie and Bob Lathan filled with rustic furniture and a large collection of pottery.



### Saturday, May 31, 2008

#### Zachary-Tolbert House, Cashiers

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Registration

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon - Symposium

12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m. - Picnic lunch

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Tour Zachary-Tolbert



House and new trails through the grounds.

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Carpool to various antique shops in Cashiers-Highlands

#### Bascom - A Center for the Visual Arts

4:00 p.m. Wine and Cheese Reception to view *Dovetail and Nail* - Southern furniture exhibition.

## Scholars participating

#### Dr. Scott Philyaw

Symposium Chair

Director, Mountain Heritage Center  
Associate Professor of History, Western Carolina University; Cullowhee, NC

#### Don Williams

Senior Furniture Conservator,  
Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.  
Author, *Saving Stuff: How to Care for and Preserve Your Collectibles, Heirlooms, and Other Prized Possessions*

#### Ken Farmer

Ken Farmer, Auctions and Appraisals  
Radford, VA; PBS *Antiques Roadshow*

#### June Lucas

Director of Research, Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts  
Winston-Salem, N.C.

#### Brian Coe

Director of Exhibition Buildings  
Old Salem Museums and Gardens  
Winston-Salem, N.C.

#### Joe Rhinehart

Instructor, Shaker Furniture  
John Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC

#### Jane Nardy

Author, *Historic Tales of Cashiers and Cashiers Valley*

Historian, Cashiers Historical Society

[www.cashiershistoricalsociety.org](http://www.cashiershistoricalsociety.org)  
or call 828-743-7710