

For Immediate Release
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The Hanging of Thomas Bowman: Randolph County's Last Public Execution

The August sun was well past its zenith as Thomas Bowman stood in his stocking feet on the trapdoor of a gallows constructed west of Asheboro. After reading aloud the order of the Court which mandated the execution, Sheriff Benjamin Millikan said to the prisoner "Mr. Bowman, you have half a minute more to live," to which Bowman replied, "Let that half minute pass out for me. I have nothing more to say." With that statement, Sheriff Millikan released the trap door and Thomas P. Bowman fell three feet – into eternity.

The journey that ended with Bowman's drop began years earlier and many miles away from Asheboro. It followed a remarkable path thru the North Carolina legal system and was joined by some of the most famous – and infamous – public figures of the day. Many elements that surface in modern court cases, such as race, religion, infidelity, and forensic evidence were present in the Bowman case. The trial had a lasting influence upon many of the participants, upon the legal system, and, in many ways, upon the citizens of Asheboro and Randolph County.

Ricky Allred, who has conducted the "Walk Thru the Past" series of tours at the Old Asheboro Cemetery, will present the story of the Thomas Bowman hanging on Saturday February 4, 2012 at 10:00 a.m., in the restored courtroom of the Old Randolph County Courthouse. The Courthouse is located at 145 Worth Street, Asheboro, NC. The talk will be illustrated by photographs, documents, newspaper accounts and maps, as well as a description of the research conducted by Mr. Allred to bring to light many details of this story.

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