

**Mecklenburg Historical Association Docents**

*Promoting Local History through Education and Research*



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*Local Sites in Financial Peril! How You Can Help*

**The President James K. Polk State Historic Site** is one of four state historic sites that the Governor's draft budget has slated to close for two years. It is up to us as advocates for Mecklenburg history to prevent this from happening. The site is on land that was owned and farmed by James' father Samuel Polk in 1795 when the future president was born. The family lived there until 1806 when they moved to Tennessee. The buildings and grounds are used to interpret the farm during that early time. The visitors' center interprets Polk's unique presidency. By his own choice he served only one term, 1845-49. During those four short years he nearly doubled the size of the country by annexing the Oregon Territory and by adding California and New Mexico. He reestablished an independent treasury, reduced tariffs, and created the department of the interior. He was quite a man, and the farm of his youth is the state's only presidential site.

Last year the site had 16,000 visitors, 25% more than the year before, yet its operating budget was reduced to \$101,861. Visitation this year is on track to continue growing. Polk is one of a handful of sites for Charlotte Mecklenburg 3<sup>rd</sup> graders' required field trips; so far this year 4,800 school children have visited. Polk is the home base of the Historical Cooking Guild of the Catawba Valley. Special event programming occurs at the site almost monthly which features either early 1800s farm life or events from Polk's 1840s presidency.

If Polk is closed it will be mothballed: the state will still provide for maintenance of the buildings, grounds and artifacts, as well as the site manager's salary to serve as a caretaker. This would not save very much money. By state rules the site is not permitted to charge admission, although some state sites are allowed to charge minimal fees. The local Polk Memorial Support Fund contributes a significant portion of the site's operating costs.

Scott Warren has been site manager at Polk for eight years. Under his direction great strides have been made in varied and imaginative programming and in research to interpret Polk's life with greater accuracy. Scott is past president of the Charlotte Regional History Consortium, and has done a splendid job of integrating Polk's story with the history of the North Carolina piedmont. His talent and intelligence would be wasted as a security guard over a locked and empty site.

How can we help? Contact the governor and your state representatives and urge them to Keep Polk Open! Visit the Polk website at [www.presjkpolk.com](http://www.presjkpolk.com) or [www.keeppolkopen.com](http://www.keeppolkopen.com) to learn more, sign an online petition, and obtain a list of representatives and their contact information. You can also find Polk on Facebook and Twitter. Petitions and emails are great, but a personal letter or phone call gets more bang for the buck. Act quickly! The state will probably address the issue in May or June.

**Latta Plantation and Rural Hill** also face cuts in funding. Both are located in Mecklenburg County parks, and the county has proposed to eliminate all County funding for the sites as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Neither site is threatened by closure; although their situations are not so dire as Polk's, County funding is very significant to them.

Latta raises 80% of its budget from programs, tours, camps, events, etc. Most of the rest comes from the county and the Arts and Science Council. Those two organizations have decreased funding by 50% over the past few years. To compensate for those losses Latta has decreased staff and increased programming, meaning more work for fewer people. With the loss of county funding, programming will have to be cut. Latta is visited annually by 42,000 people; about half of those are school children. This comes at a time when history education in the public schools woefully inadequate. The situation at Rural Hill is similar to Latta's

Write or call your Mecklenburg County Commissioners. Also sign the online petition (see link below). Each signature will generate a letter to every county commissioner in support of Latta.

<http://www.change.org/petitions/mecklenburg-county-commissioners-do-not-eliminate-funding-to-historic-latta-plantation>.

### *Meet the New Director of the Charlotte Museum of History*

Dear Friends,

I am excited and grateful for the opportunity to lead The Charlotte Museum of History (CMH) team, building on the meaningful history of the people of Mecklenburg County and Charlotte. I have always loved history and have visited many historic sites and cultural institutions. Marty and I relocated to the Charlotte area from Richmond with his job. We have two children, Marty, Jr. and Max. Marty, Jr., wife Becky, and their daughter Emily live in Atlanta. Emily will become a big sister in October. Max is a mechanical engineering student at Virginia Tech. We have a boxer named Floyd who is Chance from Homeward Bound reincarnated.

My undergraduate degree is in psychology and I have a master's degree in history. My work experience is in marketing, management, preservation, fundraising, and education. I left the corporate world to stay home with my children. I volunteered at their schools and served on the board of a grassroots youth baseball association. I enjoy working and get a strong sense of accomplishment from it. There are only a few things about my job that I consider "work." Most of my job I think of as fun. In Richmond, I transformed St. John's Church, a national historic landmark, into a thriving organization that excels at educational programming, historic preservation, and is a relevant partner to the community. When I began working there, the organization was inwardly focused, did not have a fundraising program, and handled preservation on an emergency basis. When I left, the organization had a strong development program, had completed two significant preservation projects, and operated as a partner in the community.

My charge is to transform The Charlotte Museum of History into a dynamic platform to share and experience the region's early history. Our board is prepared to step forward with vigor and creativity. Leslie and Caroline will continue to be valuable resources to the museum. I look forward to meeting all of you and to working with you to share Charlotte's history!

Sincerely, Kay Peninger

### *From the Chairman*

The days are clear,  
Day after day,  
When April's here  
That leads to May,  
And June must follow soon....

Christina Georgina Rossetti, *Sing Song*

Your read above about the intention of the state to close the President James K. Polk Historic Site. In an effort to let the legislature know that this is an incomprehensible move, MHA docents are carrying out two of the objects of our parent organization: to encourage the preservation of historic buildings, objects, and antiques throughout the County and to endeavor to promote interest and pride in the history of Mecklenburg County. Several MHA docents work at the Polk site. We held the first session of our initial Education Series there. We understand the importance of the site for school children and visitors to the state. We hope our state officials will realize the significance of this site and other sites slated for closing. Letter writing, petition signing, and conversing with our state legislators are options open to every citizen. I hope all docents and residents will remind our NC legislators that historic sites teach us about our past and inspire us to emulate the greatness of our predecessors. See how to participate elsewhere in this newsletter.

The month of May offers many opportunities for docents to participate in celebrating Charlotte Mecklenburg history. Articles in this issue of The Dandelion will tell you the particulars.

During our May monthly meeting we will be asked to endorse the changes to our Guidelines. Review the copy which was given to you in April and be ready to make your decision. We are also making provisions to improve our docent library; see "MHA Docent Library" for more information. Our May speaker will address the topic of geography. Please come and learn how geography related to history in the formation of our country. In June we will have a brief meeting at The Hugh Torance House and Store followed by our annual picnic. We will recess in July and August. Enjoy the summer! The Dandelion will return in late August. Barbara McCray Jackson

### *Newsletter Deadline*

The Deadline for the September/October Dandelion will be August 14. Send news and calendar events to Ann and Jim Williams at [mhadandelion@mindspring.com](mailto:mhadandelion@mindspring.com).

### *MHA Docent Programs*

**Tuesday, May 7, 2013**  
**Connecting With the Past through Place**

The May meeting will be held in the Fellowship Hall of Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church. Refreshments at 9:30, business meeting at 10, program at 11. Visitors are always welcome.

Ronnie Schumann will present a program showing how geography and history are intimately linked. Where history happened is just as important as what happened. Learn how distinctive regional cultures evolve, how they are used in restoring historic sites, and how interpreters use place to reveal multiple perspectives on the past.

Ronnie Schumann is a Doctoral candidate in geography at the University of South Carolina. He has had thirteen years of experience in historical interpretation in Louisiana and Alabama, and is a licensed tour guide with the City of New Orleans. Over the past four years he has volunteered at Historic Rosedale, and often portrays Dr. Caldwell's son William, as well as Alfred Shackelford, a poor white overseer.

**Tuesday, June 4, 2013**  
**Annual Picnic at Hugh Torance House and Store**

We will meet at **10 am at the Hugh Torance House and Store** for a short business meeting. After the meeting we will have a tour of the site followed by our annual picnic. The log cabin portion of the structure dates from about 1779 when Hugh Torance settled in Mecklenburg County. The house, first used as a residence, was added onto over the years, and in 1805 part of it became a store operated by Hugh and his son James. Both men were farmers as well as merchants. By 1825 cotton had become a major cash crop and James closed his store. As James prospered he build an elegant home which still stands adjacent to the old house and store. When he died he was the largest cotton planter in the county. The family left extensive documents used to interpret this special site.

After the tour we will enjoy a covered dish luncheon. Please bring a dish to share. Ice tea, water, and paper products will be provided. Also bring a lawn chair, and we'll picnic outside if the weather is pleasant.

**Directions:** The Hugh Torance House and Store is on Gilead Road, 2 miles west of I-77 exit 23. Those who wish to may form their own carpools.

*October Field Trip*  
-----AAAAnd...they're off!! Again

The October 2013 meeting and program will be a field trip to the Hickory area. Note that it will not be our usual first Tuesday, but **Thursday, October 3**. We will leave Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church at 8:00 am, and carpool to Hickory where we will tour Harper House, an 1887 Queen Anne 20-room mansion. After a short business meeting we will tour the Catawba County Museum in Newton, have lunch nearby, and perhaps have time for shopping. Lastly we'll visit the Bunker Hill covered bridge and Murray's Mill where its stone ground products can be bought. More details about each site will be in the September newsletter.

A \$10 fee covering all admissions can be paid in September. Lunch and shopping are at your own expense. Each person will be assigned to a carpool; be prepared to give your driver \$5.00 to defray the cost of gasoline. The trip is open to MHA members and the public. Please advertise this to your friends who are interested in history. It should be a wonderful fall adventure.

*MHA Dinner Meeting*

**"A Passel of Hate"**

Monday, May 13, at Trinity Presbyterian Church. Dinner is at 6:30 followed by the program at 7:15. Those not having dinner are welcome to enjoy the program at no charge. To make a reservation for dinner use the order form in your MHA Newsletter or contact Jane Johnson at 704 544 0695 or [JJCNC@aol.com](mailto:JJCNC@aol.com)

Joe Epley will speak about the impact on families and neighbors who find those closest to them taking opposing views during the weeks leading up to the brutal battle of Kings Mountain in 1780. He will read from his new book on this subject, *A Passel of Hate*, and sell and sign books. Mr. Epley was a worldwide industry leader in Public Relations with his own company and a lifelong resident of Charlotte until his recent retirement to Tryon, NC. In retirement he is researching North Carolina History and this is his first novel on the subject.

## *MHA Docent Library*

### **A Call for All Borrowed Material to Be Returned!**

At the May meeting a “Friends of the Library” committee will be formed to reorganize the library, a project that has stalled several times in the past. There are a number of tasks to be performed, and the tiny space will only accommodate two or three workers at a time. With good organization and communications we hope to have the library up and running by September. **If you have a library book, or other library materials please return them at the May meeting.** We know a number of items have “left” us over the years. We want to make an accurate inventory and compile a list of our collection that can be distributed to all docents. This will make a valuable resource easily accessible to everyone.

## *May 20th Events*

Get out your 18th and 19th Century clothing and get ready for “fun on the square.” May 20<sup>th</sup> falls on a Monday this year so all events will be on that day.

On Monday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 am we will gather at the square with muskets and cannon, and fife and drum for addresses by politicians and other VIPs. The Meck Dec will be read followed by traditional toasts with Huzzahs! and musket and cannon fire. Then we will parade to Settlers Cemetery to honor Col. Thomas Polk.

Interpreters should arrive at the square at 11:00 am, or earlier if possible, mingle with the crowd and hand out Meck Dec copies while the soldiers play music and march up and down. Free parking is available in the CCCP parking garage or you can park on the streets around the square – 8 quarters for 2 hours.

The May 20<sup>th</sup> evening event is at The Levine Museum of the New South and the McGlohon Theater uptown. The reception at the Levine Museum is invitation-only, but reenactors and docents in 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century dress are welcome, and needed, and get in free. Fife, Drum and Soldiers will all get a chance to show their stuff. Parking at the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Station garage (7<sup>th</sup> Street at the Light Rail Tracks) will be validated at the Levine front desk.

At 7 pm we will lead the reception attendees in a parade up Seventh Street to the McGlohon Theater in Spirit Square on North Tryon Street. The featured speaker this year is Isabel Wilkerson, author of *The Warmth of Other Suns*. There will be reserved seats for reenactors and docents and invited guests while the general public is invited to attend at a price of \$12.00. Ms. Wilkerson’s address will be followed by a book signing.

## *An Invitation from the Charlotte Regional History Consortium*

The Charlotte regional History Consortium invites the public to join them on June 10<sup>th</sup> for a free guided tour of the Charlotte Liberty Walk led by Jim Williams. This walk through the center city features 15 plaques commemorating Charlotte’s involvement in the Revolutionary War. Download the Charlotte Liberty Walk App on your phone or tablet and bring it along to watch history brought to life. No Revolutionary War structures survive downtown, but this visual aid will supplement Jim’s commentary and span the centuries with stories and paintings.

The Consortium will meet on June 10<sup>th</sup> at the Levine Museum of the New South at 10 am for a brief business meeting. The walk will begin at 10:30. The museum will validate parking at the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Station parking garage.

## *Latibah Collard Green Museum to Reopen*

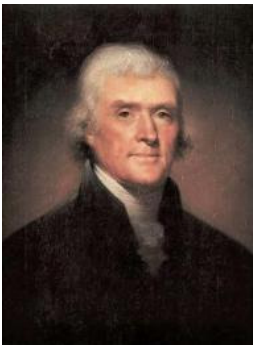
Two years ago Latibah (Life and Times in Black American History) lost its building due to flooding in NoDa. A new site has been found, and the museum is planning a grand reopening late in August to raise awareness of the museum and its new location. Featured will be life size exhibits (many of which were rescued from the flood) and interactive educational programming. The new museum will be just west of downtown at 720 Tuckaseegee Road. Look for details in the August emails of Historic Events.

## *Matthews Heritage Museum*

The town of Matthews has opened its new Heritage Museum and has hired Barbara Taylor as its director. Barbara comes to the museum as one familiar with the local area. She served as Curator of Education for the Charlotte Museum of History from 1976 to 1983, then returned to Charlotte in 1997 as director of Historic Rosedale. She was also director of two other museums, the Museum of the Albemarle in Elizabeth City, NC, and the Museum of Mobile in Mobile, Alabama.

The Matthews Heritage Museum will be open on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and needs volunteers to help staff the site. If you would like to volunteer, please email [matthewsheritage@gmail.com](mailto:matthewsheritage@gmail.com) with your name, phone number, and what you would be interested in doing.

## *An Evening with Mr. Jefferson*



In February former President Thomas Jefferson paid Charlotte a visit. His appearance and verbosity were astounding given that he has lain in repose these last 187 years on the side of the mountain he called Monticello. He was gracious, with a quick wit, and while more than willing to engage the common folk in light conversation, it was obvious that he does not suffer fools and inane questions without sharp correction.



After a delicious dinner and over coffee, which he allowed is the world's finest beverage, Mr. Jefferson spoke, in an upper class, tide-water Virginia accent, tinged with the British and French accents of his 40 years of public service. He touched on many events that had occurred in his life from the time of his birth until the "second happiest day of his life," the day he left the presidency in the hands of his successor and friend, Mr. Madison, and retired to his plantation. Mr. Jefferson was generous in giving credit to the committee who wrote the Declaration of Independence, and also to those men whose ideas were the basis for the ideals expressed in that document. He spoke of his admiration for Mr. Washington, calling him the finest man he had ever known, although not of the first order of intellectual thought. Mr. Jefferson meant no disrespect, only that Mr. Washington was not a philosophical thinker of the same rank as Locke, or Newton, or Socrates, or Plato.

Mr. Jefferson spoke at length about the United States' "second revolution", and the flaw written into the Constitution that in Presidential elections the person receiving the largest number of votes be declared president, and the person receiving the second largest number vice-president. This system was deemed practical by the framers of the Constitution before the rise of political parties, which they had hoped would never emerge in the new country. By the time Mr. Jefferson was elected as the third president, it was painfully obvious that this system

was not functioning. With the rise of political parties during President Washington's administration and having been elected in 1796 as vice-president from the opposition party, this proved to be a most unhappy experience. This rancor was exacerbated, when as President of the Senate in 1801, he, a candidate for the presidency, had to preside over a long, drawn-out runoff vote in a tie election before his first term as president commenced. Still, despite the obvious problems inherent in the Constitutional mandate, transfer of power happened in both instances without bloodshed or an armed uprising, a remarkable thing on the stage of world politics.

Mr. Jefferson addressed many other topics, the saddest in response to a question posed by a young boy regarding his greatest regret. Speaking with great feeling, he told of losing his young wife of only ten years during childbirth of their sixth child, and of his grief at having lost five of those children. He expressed his concern that even his one surviving daughter might not outlive him. This gave Mr. Jefferson an opportunity to express his views on the importance of education and his hope that, with advances in medical care brought about by increased learning, future generations would not have to live with such mortality rates.

Mr. Jefferson also addressed the rumor concerning the inscription to be carved on his tombstone (taking umbrage that it be called a 'monument'). His reasoning for not choosing to be memorialized as president, or ambassador, or any of the other elected offices he has filled was that these were *elected* offices that anyone one might occupy. The three unique accomplishments he would like listed are statements of who he is and what he deems the most important of all the things to which he has set his hand, those being the author of the Declaration of Independence, the author of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and the Father of the University of Virginia.

Regretfully, the time went by too quickly, and many questions went unaddressed: questions on the purchase of western land beyond the Mississippi and the expedition to explore it, his views on a strong state government versus a strong federal government, and his areas of interest outside the political arena, particularly agriculture, music, natural science and his collections of the same, his library, his mechanical innovations, his hospitality, and his love of learning leading to the founding of the University of Virginia. These can be questions for another day.

The evening's event was hosted by the Mecklenburg Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution which they generously opened to the public. Bill Barker, the Thomas Jefferson interpreter at Colonial Williamsburg, knows Mr. Jefferson thoroughly, perhaps as well as Mr. Jefferson ever allowed himself to be known. Mr. Barker was born and raised in Philadelphia, has a BA in History from Villanova University, and is a professional actor, director, and producer. He has performed as Mr. Jefferson in many venues, including the musical play *1776*. Additionally, he bears an uncanny resemblance to Mr. Jefferson, being of the same height, weight, and general appearance. If you missed this opportunity to dine with Mr. Jefferson, perhaps one day you may meet him on a visit to the second capital of Virginia, Williamsburg.

Valerie Jones

### *The Historical Cooking Guild of the Catawba Valley*

The cooking guild has once again taken their expertise to the Southern Regional Conference of ALHFAM, the Association of Living History, Farm, and Agricultural Museums. In April four of their members presented a pre-conference workshop at the historic Walkerton Tavern in Henrico County, Virginia.

Carolyn Dilda opened the program by urging interpreters to "be true to your site". She stressed the importance of recognizing a site's location, the economic and ethnic status of its residents and seasonally available resources, in planning cooking demonstrations. Leila Merims showed how to interpret foodways when no kitchen is available, which was appropriate as the Walkerton Tavern does not have an historic kitchen. She had numerous hands-on items to use to make her point. Sharon Van Kuren wrapped up the presentation by showing how cooking can be incorporated into children's programs, as well as special events, day camps and small classes. The workshop was supplemented by slides coordinated and shown by apprentice cook Linda Beverly.

## *North Carolina's Oldest House*

Steve and Linda Lane bought a tiny house in Edenton as an investment – to fix up as rental property. It was listed in the Edenton National Register Historic District as ca. 1900, had only two main rooms and two in the attic and was 16 by 25 feet overall. Luckily they hired restoration carpenter Wayne Griffin and expert cabinetmaker Don Jordan to do the work. As soon as they pulled off the cheap cherry paneling they realized that the house was far older than 100 years. They saw hand-hewn beams joined with wooden pegs and handmade nails. Remnants of oyster shell whitewash remained on the wood. The owners brought in experts who made borings, examined the tree rings and dated the wood to 1719 – three years before Edenton was established. This tiny house is the oldest building still standing in North Carolina. Further examination has revealed ogee molding on the beams, foundation stones which were ballast on sailing ships and a repair made with a “knee” from a sailing ship, plus evidence of a major renovation made in 1815. Nobody ever suspected that the house was that old.



What old houses do we have in Mecklenburg that we have not discovered yet?

Jim Williams (Information from the Winston Salem Chronicle and the Virginian-Pilot)

## *A History Class at Queens University*

### **North Carolina: A Brief History**

This class takes a look at the Old North State through a study of the times as witnessed by its leaders. It will include lectures and site visits of historic places including Levine Museum of the New South and Latta Plantation.

Class Dates & Times:

Saturdays, May 11, 18, June 1, 8, 15 (skip Memorial Day Weekend)

Session 1 (May 11): 1 to 3pm

Sessions 2-5: 11 am to noon – lecture, noon to 1 pm, lunch break, 1to 3pm - site visit.

The class will be taught by Dr. Mollie Camp Davis, Professor of History, Emerita, at Queens

Learn more and register at [www.queens.edu/continuing-education](http://www.queens.edu/continuing-education) (Program Categories, History and Politics)



### *North Carolina Anniversaries*

We all know that 2013 is the Sestercentennial of Mecklenburg County, founded in 1763, but there are a number of other significant anniversaries to be celebrated this year.

1663 – 350 years ago – is the Sesquarcentennial of the year that King Charles II granted The North Carolina Charter to eight Lords Proprietor. Among the names are ones familiar to us today – Duke of Albemarle (a Sound), Earl of Clarendon (SC County), Baron Berkeley (SC County), Earl of Craven (NC County), Sir George Carteret (NC County, later Lord Granville, also a NC County), Sir John Colleton (SC County), and, of course, Anthony Ashley Cooper (two South Carolina Rivers.)

1713 – 300 years ago – the Tricentennial of the Battle of Neoheroaka or Nooherooka, the ultimate battle in the Tuscarora War. In this 3½ year war the Tuscarora tribe rose up against the Europeans, beginning with the murder of explorer John Lawson. In 1713 they were defeated at this battle with great loss of life and eventually fled to Western New York State.

1713 – 300 years ago – the Tricentennial of the establishment of the city of New Bern, NC.

1763 – 250 years ago – the Sestercentennial of the establishment of Mecklenburg County.

1813 – 200 years ago – the Bicentennial of the beginning of the Cotton industry in the South. In that year, in Lincolnton, Michael Schenck established the first successful textile mill south of New England. Lincolnton is in Lincoln County which was originally part of Mecklenburg County.

### *A History Blog*

Our own Scott Syfert blogs monthly on interesting aspects of our history. Take a look at <http://allthingsliberty.com/2013/02/second-coming-of-a-revolutionary-war-patriot/>

### *Patriot Grave Marking Ceremony*

On Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am the Mecklenburg Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution will conduct two grave marking ceremonies at Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church, 101 Sugar Creek Rd W., Charlotte, NC 28213. Sugaw Creek Church is one of the seven original Presbyterian churches of Mecklenburg County.

Patriots Abraham and Hezekiah Alexander will be honored for their service in the American Revolution. Both of these men are known as Signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, May 20<sup>th</sup> 1775, along with other contributions to Mecklenburg County and the State of North Carolina for the Cause of Freedom.

## *The History Calendar*

Admission charged at all events unless otherwise noted.

Check the Charlotte Regional History Consortium website for other events.

<http://www.charlotteregionalhistory.org>

### *Historic Rosedale*

3427 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC, 704 335 0325, <http://www.historicrosedale.org>

#### **Family Festival, Saturday, May 18 from 11 am to 4 pm**

This year the festival will include a variety of vendors and some of North Carolina's best artisans including potters, wood turners, quilters, jewelry makers and other artists. For the children there will be a presentation by the Raptor Center, Free pony rides, reenactors in costume throughout the day, crafts to make and a scavenger hunt. Hotdogs, Hamburgers, Soft Drinks, Beer and Snacks will be available for purchase all day!

#### **A Victorian Wedding, Saturday and Sunday, June 1 and 2 from 1 pm.**

Wedding bells are ringing once again at Historic Rosedale. This year we recreate the wedding of Rosedale bride Miss Sarah Jane Caldwell to Mr. George Donnell. Will fears of secession and war rob this 1860 ceremony of its joy? Will enslaved lovers take advantage of this happy occasion to "jump the broom" themselves? Find out as you watch the Caldwell family portrayed through living history interpreters. See Caldwell family artifacts including Addie Caldwell's 1876 wedding dress, displayed only once a year for this event.

### *Latta Plantation*

5225 Sample Road, Huntersville, NC, 704 875 2312, <http://www.lattaplantation.org>

#### **World War II Reenactment, Saturday and Sunday, May 4 and 5, from 10 am to 4 pm.**

Step into 1943 Sicily as we honor our veterans with this recreation of a World War II battle. See the Allied and Axis forces battle across the plantation. The main battle is at 2:00 pm each day and many other demonstrations and activities are ongoing. Sunday Only: Period Soldier Church Service at 10:30 am.

#### **Living History Weekend, Saturday May 25 from 10 am to 4 pm, Sunday, May 26 from 1 to 4 pm.**

History will be brought to life with demonstrations of open-hearth cooking, weaving, spinning, sheep shearing, blacksmithing and woodworking

#### **Latta Plantation Summer Camps for Soldiers**

For all camps, contact Matthew Waisner at 704-875-2312, ext. 305 or [mwaisner@lattaplantation.org](mailto:mwaisner@lattaplantation.org) for registration and more information. All camps are four days, from 9 am to 3 pm and cost \$175.00 per camper.

- **Civil War Soldier Camps**, July 22-25 and August 5-8, boys and girls ages 8-12.
- **53rd Call-to-Arms Camp** - Advanced Civil War Camp for 13-14 year olds that have graduated out of the Civil War Soldier Camp. July 15-18.
- **Revolutionary War Soldier Camp**, June 17-20. For boys and girls ages 8-12.
- **Miss Jane's Academy Civil War Camps**, Monday through Thursday, July 22-25 and August 5-8, 9 am to 3 pm each day, Cost \$175 per camper. For girls ages 8-12. Hands-on activities include spying, making fans, sewing, open-hearth cooking, and English Country Dancing to name a few. Each girl will receive an apron, bonnet, and t-shirt to keep. Contact Nicole Cheslak at 704-875-2312, ext. 304 or [ncheslak@lattaplantation.org](mailto:ncheslak@lattaplantation.org) for more information.

**Farm Camps**

For more information and registration, contact Nicole Cheslak at 704-875-2312, ext. 304 or [ncheslak@lattaplantation.org](mailto:ncheslak@lattaplantation.org)

- **Mini Farm Camp, Tuesday through Thursday, June 4-6 and August 13-15, from 9 am to noon each day, ages 4-5, cost \$60.00 per camper.**  
Campers will meet the Latta animals, up close and personal, and engage in hands-on farm activities,
- **Jr. Farm Camp, Monday through Thursday, June 10-13 and July 29-August 1, from 9 am to 1 pm each day, ages 6-8, cost \$100 per camper.**  
In addition to getting up close to a variety of farm animals, campers will experience farm chores, animal care, plants and medicines, and more!
- **Farm Camp, Monday through Thursday, July 8-11, from 9 am to 3pm each day, ages 9-12, cost \$175.00 per camper.**  
Campers will learn “hands-on” how to care for farm animals, where food comes from, and how to survive on a 19th century farm.
- **Advanced Farm Camp, Monday through Friday, June 24-28, 9 am to 4 pm each day, ages 13-17, cost \$200.00 per camper.**  
This is an intense, extremely hands-on training course in all things 'farming'. The course includes animal husbandry, historic farming techniques, woodworking, and more! This labor-intensive camp is designed for those with a serious interest in farming, animals, and agriculture, and those who have an interest in veterinary medicine.

**Mini Pirate for a Day Camp- One day only, Saturday, July 6 from 10 am to 1 pm, ages 5-7, cost \$25.00 per camper, pre-registration required.**

Become a pirate for a day. Learn all about pirates and get a bandanna to keep.

*Hugh Torrance House and Store*

8231 Gilead Road, Huntersville, NC

**House Tours on first and third Sundays from 2 to 5 pm. May 5 and 19, June 2 and 16, July 7 and 21, August 4 and 18.**

The Hugh Torrance House and Store is truly a Mecklenburg treasure. The log house section of the building was built as a residence about 1780. In 1805 the building was expanded to include a store which operated until 1825. As the Torrance family obtained land and wealth it became a cotton plantation of 3,000 acres worked by over a hundred slaves. Extensive family history kept through the generations allows us to interpret nearly a century of Mecklenburg's rich mercantile and plantation history.

*The Charlotte Museum of History*

3500 Shamrock Drive, Charlotte, NC, 704 568 1774, <http://www.charlottemuseum.org>

**First Saturday at the Hezekiah Alexander Homesite, Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> from 1 to 5 pm.**

Revolution is in the air! Hezekiah Alexander and his friend, Captain James Jack, discuss the events which led to the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of 1775 and speculate on what lies ahead. Mary Alexander shares her thoughts on domestic duties and the looming war. In the kitchen, an enslaved woman explains that Africans should be included in the talk of liberty. Park in the lot on Shamrock Drive and walk around the main building. Frequent tours begin at the American Freedom Bell and last one hour.

**First Saturdays at the Hezekiah Alexander Homesite, June 1, July 6, and August 3 from 1 to 5 pm.**

Details will appear in your weekly emails on Historic Events

## *President James K. Polk State Historic Site*

12031 Lancaster Hwy., Pineville, NC, 704 889 7145

[www.polk.nchistoricsites.org](http://www.polk.nchistoricsites.org)

### **Photography and the White House Exhibit opened Saturday, April 27, Free.**

This exhibit examines the role that this new technology played in the White House during Polk's term in office. Historic cameras are on display showcasing photography advancements one hundred years after Polk's presidency.

### **Neighbors in Conflict, Saturday, May 18 from 10 am to 4 pm. Free.**

This Militia Muster for the Mexican-American War will illustrate the life of a common citizen who is mustered into service during the 1846 conflict with Mexico. Several living history vignettes around the site will demonstrate military drills and practices, camp life, and musket firing.

### **Heritage Days Summer Camp, Monday through Wednesday, June 10-12, 9 am to 1 pm each day, boys and girls age 8-13. \$40 per child.**

Learn about a variety of trades during the early 1800's in Mecklenburg County. Costumed interpreters will demonstrate and explain the importance of trades and their impact on life. Participate in trades, arts, and crafts. Snacks are provided.

### **Heritage Days Summer Camp, Monday through Wednesday, July 29-31, 9 am to 1 pm each day, boys and girls age 8-13. \$40 per child**

Explore history through nature by learning how the Catawba Indians and early settlers lived off the land in Mecklenburg County over 200 years ago! Campers will learn about plants and wildlife in the backcountry. Camp will conclude with a special wildlife demonstration presented by Emily Walker, a certified naturalist

## *Schiele Museum*

1500 E. Garrison Blvd., Gastonia, N.C. 704 866 6900 <https://www.schielemuseum.org>

### **Sheep to Shortgown, Tuesday, May 14 at 5 pm, Free.**

Discover the basic steps our ancestors used to make clothing from raw fibers. See wool from heritage sheep spun by hand on an 18<sup>th</sup> century spinning wheel. A free peek preview for Sheepshearing, below.

### **Sheepshearing, Sunday, May 19 from 1 to 5 pm.**

Experience the process from hand shearing a sheep to modeling a short gown. See wool fibers carded then spun into thread by Backcountry interpreters. Enjoy tunes from the 18th century and delicious aromas from the kitchen's open hearth.

### **The Dyer's Craft, Sunday, June 23 from 1 to 5 pm.**

Throughout history, humans have brought color into their lives in many ways. Visit the Backcountry Farm to see fibers colored with natural dyes and an 18th century interpreter stitching needlework with hand dyed thread.

### **On the Great Wagon Road, Sunday, August 25 from 1 to 5 pm.**

By 1776 there were over 250,000 settlers in the Backcountry. The main route of settlement was from Pennsylvania down the Great Wagon Road into the Carolinas and on to Georgia. Why did they come? How did they travel? What did they carry with them? Learn answers to these questions at the Backcountry farm.

### Schiele Workshops

**The Dyer's Craft Workshop, Friday through Sunday, June 7-9. \$90**

Explore the craft of natural dyes with a study of fibers, mordents, dyestuffs and dye techniques. Experiment with primary source dye recipes using native plant materials and common trade dyes. Primary source materials and dyes used in early America will draw participants into an exploration which encompasses history, chemistry, botany, textiles and fashion. Call 704-854-6676 by May 17.

**Twigcraft & Knifecraft Workshop, Saturday, May 11 from 9 am to 4 pm. \$55**

Participants will create stick-projects including: hangers, fasteners, cooking gear, utensils, and other camp gadgets. Many knife skills will be taught: safety, grips, strokes, holding positions and power/control strategies. Contact Steve Watts at 704-866-6912

**Classic Candlecraft Workshop, Sunday, May 12 from 9 am to 4 pm. \$55**

Candles provide inexpensive lighting and fire starting aids on a rainy day. We'll explore candle types and candle holders, stands and lanterns. Participants will create candles using three methods: dipping, pouring and molding. Contact Steve Watts 704-866-6912

### Schiele Summer Camps

**Bones, Drums, & Penny Whistles, Monday through Friday, June 10-14, from 9 am to noon, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> graders.**

In the late 1700's music played an important role in war and peace; from the Battle of Kings Mountain, to the ancestral tunes of England and Scotland, and the rhythms of Africa. Come explore our heritage through song, dance and music. Learn to play bones, drums and penny whistles. It's history with a beat!

**Yankee Doodle Dandy Camp, Monday through Friday, August 5-9 from 9 am to noon, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders.**

Music in the Piedmont backcountry was important in war and peace time. After daily chores were done, families often enjoyed pastimes which included music and dance. Explore our heritage through song, dance and music. Learn to play bones, drums and penny whistles. It's history with a beat!

### *Gaston County Museum*

131 West Main Street Dallas, NC. (704)922-7681, #2 [www.gastoncountymuseum.org](http://www.gastoncountymuseum.org)

**For the Summer Program Brochure, go to**

<http://www.gastoncountymuseum.org/documents/2013Summerbrochurefrontsidepdf.pdf>

**Preschool Preview Programs: bring your preschoolers to the Museum on these Saturdays from 10 to 11 am for special programs, ages 3+.**

- **Mother's Day, May 11.** Talk about Mother's Day's history, and make crafts as a gift for mother.
- **Patriotic Party, June 8.** Wear red, white, and blue to celebrate our Independence Day! Through stories, songs and crafts learn all about the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.
- **Horse and Carriage, July 13.** Children and their adult will tour NC's largest public exhibit of horse drawn carriages and sleighs right here at our Museum!
- **Clay Play, August 10.** Using special clay for toddlers each child will make projects to take home. The clay will air dry and may be painted later.

**Mother/Daughter Tea, Saturday, May 11 from 1 to 2 pm, ages 6-up**

Learn about Victorian etiquette, manners, and the history of tea in America. Enjoy a tea party complete with fresh brewed tea, lemonade, pastries, and whipped cream. Dressing up is encouraged! Ladies can also wear their favorite hat!

**Civil War Living History, Saturday, May 11 from 11:30 am to 2:30 PM. Wreath Laying at 1 pm, Free.**

The Confederate History and Monument Preservation Society, portraying Company H of the 23rd NC troops will have a display, answer questions about the Civil War, and give firing and drilling demonstrations. The wreath laying at the Confederate Marker in Dallas, at 1 pm will honor North Carolina Confederate Memorial Day

**9<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Fun Day, Saturday, May 25 from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm.**

Visit the museum, sample free ice cream, take a carriage ride for \$5, participate at our craft table, and play historic games on the back lawn.

**Drop-In Day Camps, Thursdays from 10:30 am to Noon, Free, ages 8-12**

- June 13 – Natural Fibers; June 20 – Cotton Production; June 27 – Dyeing; July 11 – Summer Fun; July 18 – Spinning; July 25 – Weaving.

**Summer Camps, Fridays from 10 am to 3 pm, ages 8-12**

- June 21 – Civil War Soldier; June 28 – Cartooning with Dave McDonald (ages 10-14); July 12 – Victorian Girls Camp; July 19 – Pottery Camp; July 26 – Photography Camp; August 9 – Civil War Soldier.

*Historic Brattonsville*

1444 Brattonsville Rd., McConnells, SC, 803 684 2327

<http://www.chmuseums.org/brattonsville>

**Memorial Day, Monday, May 27, from 10 am to 4 pm.**

Historic Brattonsville will be open to visitors for this special Monday holiday. Come and join us for historic interpretation as we honor all of our veterans and their bravery in the numerous wars in which they fought.

**Time Travelers Camp: The Revolutionary War, Monday through Friday, June 10-14, from 9 am to 2 pm, Grades 4-6, \$185.00. Space is limited; make reservations as soon as possible**

Step back to the year 1780 and experience life in the Carolina Backcountry during the Revolutionary War. Campers will be Patriots or Loyalists, and learn military tactics for the Battle at the end of camp. Activities include: hearth cooking, military drilling, quill pen construction, colonial games, and much more!

**Independence Day Celebration, Thursday, July 4 from 10 am to 4 pm.**

On this special day, for the first time ever, we will be doing interpretation at Hightower Hall, the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Bratton home, built in 1854 by John Bratton, Jr. and recently restored and renovated. There will be fun for the whole family. We will read the Declaration of Independence and offer toasts to our great state and nation.

**The Battle of Huck's Defeat, Saturday and Sunday, July 13 and 14 from 10 am to 4 pm.**

This Revolutionary War battle that took place on July 12, 1780 will be reenacted along with other Revolutionary War battles. Reenactors will be on site to depict the various aspects of camp life.

**Occupations of the Past, Saturday, August 31 from 10 am to 4 pm.**

Explore the occupations of our Carolina Piedmont ancestors and see how their lives differed or were similar to ours. Occupations such as weavers, doctors, soldiers and more will be highlighted by hands-on demonstrations. Costumed interpreters will bring the past to life.

**Living History Saturdays at Historic Brattonsville, Saturdays, May 4, 11, 18, 25; June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; July 6, 20, 27; August 3, 10, 17, 24**

Join us as historic interpreters bring to life many aspects of our ancestor's past. The summer months are busy with gardening, field work, cooking, social time and more. There are always things happening on the plantation.

*Mount Holly Historical Society*

131 South Main, Mount Holly, NC [mhhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:mhhistoricalsociety@gmail.com)

**SpringFest Celebration, Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 4 pm.**

The MHHS headquarters will be open for visitors and members.

*Charlotte Folk Society*

Great Aunt Stella Center, 926 Elizabeth Ave., Charlotte

[www.folksociety.org](http://www.folksociety.org)

**Bluegrass by Jeanette & Johnny Williams and Scott Freeman, Friday, May 10.**

**Traditional Appalachian Ballad Singer Elizabeth LaPrelle, Friday, June 14.**

**Southern Singer/Songwriter Kate Campbell, Friday, August 9.**

7:30 each night. Free; donations appreciated.

*Fort Dobbs State Historic Site*

438 Fort Dobbs Road, Statesville, NC 704 873 5882

<http://www.fortdobbs.org>

**18th Century Camp Life, Saturday June 8 from 10 am to 4 pm, Sunday, June 9 from 10 am to 3 pm.**

Historic interpreters will present musket and cannon firing demonstrations as well as on-going demonstrations of 18th Century camp life.

**Oven Construction, Saturday, July 13 from 10 am to 2 pm.**

Help historic interpreters build a clay baking oven of the type used by soldiers and settlers in the 18th Century.

**The Cherokee Warrior, Saturday, August 10 from 10 am to 4 pm**

Visit with historic interpreters portraying Cherokee warriors from the French and Indian War to learn more about their lives, equipment and weapons.

*Matthews Historical Foundation*

Programs held at the Matthews Woman's Club, 208 South Trade Street

**Matthews Heritage Museum.** See the announcement of our new Museum and director Barbara Taylor on page 6 of this newsletter.

**Matthews Remembered, Reception and Video DVD, Sunday, May 19 at 2 pm.**

A video DVD *Matthews Remembered* will premiere at the Matthews Town Hall. The reception will be at 2 pm with the DVD shown at 2:45. It features stories and fond memories of Matthews in the 1930s, 40s and 50s and will be available for purchase. Afterwards guests are invited to preview the new Matthews Heritage Museum.

*Stanly County Museum*

245 East Main Street, Albemarle, NC, 704-986-3777, [www.stanlycountymuseum.com](http://www.stanlycountymuseum.com)

**Special Programs.**

- **Who was John Stanly?** Thursday, May 30, at 6:30 pm with Chris Bramlett.  
Fellowship Center, Central United Methodist Church, 172 N. 2nd Street – Albemarle
- **The Lynching of Alec Whitley**, Thursday, June 20 at 6:30 pm with David Almond.  
Stanly County Public Library, Meeting Room - Lower Level.
- **Robert E. Lee, Not Just the Soldier**, Tuesday, July 30 at 6:30 pm, with Steven Campbell.  
Christ Episcopal Church, 428 Pee Dee Avenue, Albemarle.
- **Confederate Archives in Stanly County**, Thursday, August 29 at 6:30 pm with Ralph Ganis  
New London Fire Station, 310 South Main Street, New London

MHA Docents  
Jim and Ann Williams  
1601 South Wendover Road  
Charlotte, NC 28211