

November - December  
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Newsletter of the  
*Mecklenburg Historical  
Association and MHA Docents*

*Spreading Knowledge of our History Like the Seeds of a Dandelion*

<http://www.meckdec.org/>

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Submission for this newsletter should be sent to [sarahsuenc@gmail.com](mailto:sarahsuenc@gmail.com). Deadline for January - February MHA Dandelion Newsletter is December 19.



*From the President*

Linda Dalton

Greetings to our MHA Membership!

Your MHA Board of Directors met on October 18th with all Directors in attendance. Our Directors are: Linda Dalton, President; Luther Moore; Sarah Sue Hardinger; Barbara Jackson and Janet Dyer (current co-chairs of the MHA Docents Committee); Barbara Taylor, Program Chair; Robert Ryals; Jane Johnson; Tom Cottingham, Treasurer. I am personally so grateful for each of our MHA Board members and the time they give to support and promote the history of Mecklenburg County. If anyone has a suggestion for an additional MHA Board Member, please let me know.

We have decided that a meeting for our entire membership is still premature through the end of December 2021. The Board will meet again in January and hopefully will feel comfortable scheduling a meeting for all our members in March of 2022. The health and safety of our members is our top priority.

Meanwhile, as you will see in the new History Calendar, there are many activities planned at our historic sites throughout Mecklenburg County. Please plan to attend some of these events and bring your friends. Also, the Voices From The Past event is tentatively scheduled for April of 2022 with a final decision to be made by March 1, 2022. Let me know if you have suggestions for MHA. We welcome input from our members.

***IF YOU HAVE NOT RENEWED YOUR MHA MEMBERSHIP, PLEASE DO SO NOW.***

*MHA Dinner Meetings*

We are sorry to announce that we have postponed our meetings due to concerns around Covid for our repeat attendees. We will revisit the possibility of in person meetings in January.



### *From the Docent Co-Chairs*

Barbara McCray Jackson, Docent Co-chair

It will be a joyous morning on November 2nd when we meet at Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church. Just a decade ago we would not have the opportunity to meet during a pandemic. We are grateful that electronic meetings are now the norm. Valerie Jones gave us the opportunity to meet online and for that we are most grateful. We will fellowship together these last two months of the year .

During our September meeting we elected the board of officers responsible for leading us for the term of 2022 to 2024. They will assume their responsibilities at the meeting in January. Our new officers are:

Chairman	Audrey Mellichamp
Vice-chair	Lynn Mintzer
Secretary	Holly Jeffries
Newsletter	Susan Worcester

Congratulations, ladies. We will support you as you direct us in our quest to learn more about historic events, sites, and individuals in Mecklenburg.

Our dues to MHA for 2022 are being collected this autumn. You may bring your check to the November meeting or you may mail it to Valerie Jones by December 7th. Audrey will accept late payments in 2022.

In this issue we will read about our My Passports to History. You may support this project by taking your young visitors to the sites and encourage neighbors, friends and relatives to do the same .

The pandemic has delayed the celebration of our 30 years of service to the public. MHA Docents have contributed to the historic sites through research, guiding, and in administrative positions. We have supplemented social studies lessons in the public schools and at sites. We have given programs for children during summer months. Research regarding the Piedmont from the earliest inhabitants and settlers to people of the present day has been recorded in manuals and published in books and professional journals. The Charlotte Regional History Consortium was organized by the MHA Docents. This paragraph is a limited reminder of the contributions we make to the community. Now we should recruit teachers, college students and neighbors to join us. We welcome those who wish to work with us as we continue to conduct research and share information about the people, places, and events in Mecklenburg and beyond.

### *My Passport to History*

by Linda Beverly

MHA Docents have long had a program to encourage children to visit a number of local sites. The Passport to History is focused at elementary school students. Through this program students learn about local history in a fun and interactive way.

Girl Scout, Payton Bjurstrom, worked with 10 local historic sites and museums to create the Passport as her Gold Award project. The 10 participating sites include Rural Hill Plantation, Reed Gold Mine SHS, Historic Rosedale, Historic Latta Plantation, Matthews Heritage Museum, Carl J. McEwen Historic Village, and the Schiele Museum. Each participating historic site or museum has a unique page of questions and activities which the students complete on their visit and has signed by a site staff member. After 5 sites are visited students are eligible to receive a Passport to History patch.

The My Passport to History booklet is available for \$3.00 at most participating sites or by contacting the Mecklenburg Historical Association Docents at PO Box 35032, Charlotte, NC 28235.



## *MHA Docent Programs*

MHA Docents General Meeting  
Tuesday, November 2, 2021, 9:30 a.m.  
Fellowship Hall at Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church

### **The Latta Collection**

Come join us on Tuesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, and take a peek at some of the artifacts from the Latta Collection. Longtime MHA member and Co-chair of the Catawba River Valley Decorative Arts Survey, Jane Estep, will pose a critical question – “Is our stuff still worth saving?” Due to the recent closing of James Latta’s home and plantation (Latta Place, Inc.) in Huntersville and its future uncertainty, she will bring a few artifacts that have been in temporary care plus show images of other family and local pieces. What will happen to them?

In lieu of our usual spread of goodies at the refreshment table, the Hospitality Committee will provide bottled water and a pre-packaged treat. And, to be cautious, seating will be spread out.

**Attendees:** Please be aware that Mecklenburg County continues to be under a mask mandate which states: “Individuals must wear Face Coverings when indoors in all offices, businesses, establishments, and other public places.”

It will be wonderful to finally see everyone in person. See you soon!



## *History News*

News, thoughts and bits of history since we were last together.



### *MHA Dandelion Newsletter*

The editorship of this newsletter is designed to be a rotating yearly position. It is time to assign this to a new person for 2022. We would like to identify two or three people who would be willing to take a yearly turn so that no one is overburdened.

The position requires considerable facility with MS Word and possibly MS Power Point to layout photos. It takes about six hours five times a year in the second to last week of February, April, August, October and December.

If you would be willing to be editor for one year, please contact Sarah Sue Hardinger at [sarahsuenc@gmail.com](mailto:sarahsuenc@gmail.com).

## Matthews Heritage Museum Chosen by TAP

The Matthews Heritage Museum has been participating in TAP or the Traveling Archivist Program. The Traveling Archivist Program (TAP) began with funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and is administered by the State Archives of North Carolina. The purpose of TAP is to help repositories improve preservation and access for archival collections. Repositories include historical and genealogical societies; public libraries; the archives of colleges, hospitals, and other organizations; historic houses and sites, museums; and other publicly accessible institutions with materials documenting history and culture.

After applying for assistance, the Matthews Heritage Museum was selected as one of 6 repositories in the state to participate. The Museum owns a collection of approximately 700 documents donated by the descendants of Dr. H. V. Massey who owned the house where the museum is housed. With the assistance of a traveling archivist we have culled the collection and approximately 70 letters between family members will be digitized and put on Digital NC for others use. A few

unique receipts have also been selected that have relevance to telling the history of the family. Applications for 2022 will be accepted early next year. For more information about TAP, please contact [Adrienne Berney](#), (919) 814-6863.



## Annual Rosedale Oyster Roast a Rousing Success

After a postponement in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Historic Rosedale's Oyster Roast tradition came roaring back in 2021.

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon, over one hundred and eighty sponsors, guests, volunteers and staff gathered in the Rosedale Pavilion for a wonderful afternoon of great food and fellowship. Croquet was available on the lawn and custom logoed corn hole boards were set-up between the oyster tables and the seating area. Mr. Barclay and friends provided music for a festive mood. The Pavilion shone in its first large event for the Historic Rosedale Foundation and we look forward to many more gatherings in this venue in the future.

A feast was provided by Charlotte's The Comet Grill owned and operated by Tommy Noblet. Roasted-to-perfection oysters were, of course, the star attraction. There was lively conversation at the shucking tables and custom oyster knives crafted at Rosedale's blacksmith shop could be spotted here and there. A traditional Low-country boil and hot dog bar rounded out the day's menu. Thank you to all the volunteer oyster roasters and the staff at The Comet Grill for such satisfying and delicious fare.

The Oyster Roast is a main fundraiser for the Historic Rosedale Foundation which shoulders the responsibility of caretaking our circa 1815 house, gardens, and grounds. This year's event raised just over \$9,000 for the Foundation, an all-time high. In addition, almost \$1,500 was raised for the African American Legacy at Historic Rosedale project. The Legacy project will expand the presentation of the story of those enslaved at Rosedale, focusing on the roles of the enslaved in daily life at Rosedale prior to Emancipation and the stories of some of the descendants after the Civil War and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

An event this size can only happen with the dedication and support of many hands. Historic Rosedale is fortunate to have many wonderful volunteers; we cannot thank you enough for your loyalty and hard work. In addition, we thank our sponsors: Ms. Dale Halton and Mr. Fred Wagner, Dr. Rick Zuber, Dr. Cleve Howard, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Spada, Mr. and Mrs. Don Abernathy, The American Welding Society, Mrs. Barbara McCray Jackson, Ms. Elizabeth Myers, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Weisiger, Ms. Peggy Young, and Mr. and Mrs. Phil Baucom. Of course, without ticket sales there would be

no event; thank you to all who purchased tickets and came out to support this event.

Special thanks and well wishes go out to Dr. Rick Zuber, long time Oyster Roast Chairman, for leading the Oyster Roast team and effort. Rick will be stepping down as Chairman after this year's event to focus on other non-profit commitments and we wish him all the best - We couldn't have done it without you, "Zuber".

## **Rosedale October Haunted Happenings SOLD OUT**

All our Haunted Happenings for the month of October were sold out. We had an amazing response to our Paranormal Investigation on October 8th and 9th. Our Haunted History: A Look at the Victorian Funeral sold out quickly as well. We received wonderful publicity from WCCB's Wilsons World morning show on October 14th. Special Programs Coordinator Cher Lambeth was a guest and response to the show was so overwhelming we added a second Haunted History: A Look at the Victorian Funeral to meet public demand.

(Ed Note: Tickets are still available for the Ghost Hunts at Hugh Torance House and Store on October 29 and 30. [Halloween Spirit Days](#))

## ***Fall Into Matthews Festival***

Matthews Heritage Museum just participated in a new festival called Fall into Matthews on October 16, 2021. As one of sixty plus vendors or craftsmen, our volunteers greeted over 350 visitors and shared information about the museum and its programs.



## ***Piedmont Pottery & Pickin'***

On Saturday October 2, Culture & Heritage Museums again hosted Piedmont Pottery & Pickin'. A constant yet safe group of enthusiasts enjoyed dozens of artisans offering a wide variety of pottery. Everything from ugly jugs to delicate items for the home delighted the eye and the touch. I took home more than I had planned to.

The music offered by several bluegrass groups made a gentle background for the shoppers or a great concert for those who gathered close to the stage.

The event was held on the grounds of Historic Brattonsville's Hightower Hall, the grand Italianate house at the northern entrance of the main site. The house was open for self-directed tours with a fascinating explanation of the history of the building twice during the day. The main site was also open. They have done a fine job on rebuilding the store that burned several years ago.

Watch your calendar for next year. This is a fun event in one of our most complex historic sites.



## *Upcoming Special Events*

### *Hart Square 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Festival is On!*

Hart Square is a 200 acre nature preserve that features the nation's largest collection of historic log structures. The village was started by Dr. Robert W. Hart III.

Among these 103 testaments of American history stand thirty homes, two churches, and several trade shops. Each cabin has been furnished by Becky Hart with artifacts from the 1800s that she and Bob collected over the past 60 years at flea markets and estate sales all over the Eastern United States. Each cabin appears as if a pioneer just got up and walked out moments prior. All of the cabins were rescued from the Piedmont and Western regions of North Carolina.

Since 1986, as the first touches of autumn fleck Hog Hill on the fourth Saturday in October, Hart Square bustles with hundreds of knowledgeable artisans and docents demonstrating and sharing the craftsmanship and subsistence of Carolina's pioneers.

To enter the village on festival day is to enter the early 1800s. Here, visitors will witness everything from flax making, cotton baling, and tinsmithing to apple butter making and the sweet sounds of old time music. Demonstrators are dressed in period clothing and truly bring the village to life. We boast the most talented and authentic demonstrators in the country and know you will agree with us when you come to visit.

**Tickets go very fast**, so don't wait to go to <https://www.hartsquare.com/events/the-annual-festival> to get yours.

**Saturday October 23rd**  
**10 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

Tickets are \$45 a person (plus \$3.15 tax)  
Children 12 and under are free



## **19th Francis Marion Symposium**

Dear Patriots & Marion Advocates,  
Hope you're well & getting out,  
We're working on the 19th

Francis Marion Symposium:

The Agenda is a work on progress.

Come to the **19<sup>th</sup> Francis Marion/Swamp Fox**

**Symposium Oct 22-23, 2021, Manning, SC**

**Explore the Revolutionary War Southern Campaign with General Francis Marion**

**Immerse yourself in Francis Marion's world** and the significance of the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution.

**"Times of Francis Marion, 1732-1795"**

Presentations & Evening dinner in Rev. History

Site: FE DuBose Campus, Central Carolina Technical College, I-95, Exit 122, Manning, SC

***Plan now: You're invited to register & participate.***

Register on-line & we'll send you a response.

Then you can send your check.

Our focus is the Southern Campaign in SC, battles & related to FM as much as possible, & the times as they were.

Look forward to hearing from you,

All the best,

Carole & George

*"In God We Trust" & "God Bless America!"*

*Swamp Fox Murals Trail Society / Francis Marion*

*Advocates: a 501(c)(3), non-profit*

*PO Box 667, Manning SC 29102*

*803-478-2645, cells: 803-460-9626, 803-460-7416*

*Francis Marion Symposium: Oct 22-23,*

*2021 [www.francismarionsymposium.com](http://www.francismarionsymposium.com)*

*Clarendon Rev. history: [www.clarendonmurals.com](http://www.clarendonmurals.com)*

## ***Come One, Come All !!!! New Statue on Charlotte Trail of History***

The Charlotte Trail of History will be unveiling a bronze statue honoring famed Civil Rights lawyer, Julius Chambers. It will take place on the Little Sugar Creek Greenway on Saturday, October 30th at 10 am. Free parking in the Metropolitan Garage. The event will be held just South of the Metropolitan buildings at the large fountain.



## *Halloween Weekend at Hugh Torance House and Store*

### **Fun in the daytime, the real deal at night.**

Come to the Hugh Torance House and Store at 8231 Gilead Rd, Huntersville, NC 28078 anytime between 10 AM and 3 PM on Saturday October 30 for a fun day for the kids. Costumes are welcome. We will have a “haunted” trail targeted at kindergartners, pumpkin painting, and a spooky photo booth. We will have lots of traditional games like musical chairs, ring toss, hoop rolling, and some with a twist like the Tombstone Toss with hula hoops and an egg race with bean bags.



The historic roots of some of our Halloween traditions will be the subject of our storytellers. Music to match our fabulous three-era historic house and store will accompany your self-guided tour or wait for the two guided tours at 11 and 1. If you need a traditional fall snack, visit the funnel cake truck on site.

The site will be open for regular tours on Sunday from 1 to 4 with guided tours at 1 and 3.

PARANORMAL SPIRIT (GHOST) HUNTS OCT. 29 & 30 8 - 10 PM



On the evening before, Oct. 29, and the evening after our fun day, Oct. 30, we will be hosting the Charlotte Area Paranormal Society. They will be using state-of-the-art instruments to seek evidence of spirits in our 240 year old property and you are invited to watch or even participate. Each evening we will gather at 7:30 and begin the search about 8:00. Expect to take about two hours to cover the entire property and then discuss the findings.

We are limiting the group each night to 20 people so go to our Event Brite page and sign up soon. Tickets are \$25 per adult. [BUY TICKETS](#)





## MHA Docents

### General Meeting and Christmas Tea Luncheon

Tuesday, December 7, 2021, 9:30 a.m.

Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church

Fellowship Hall



Following a short business meeting which will begin at 9:45 a.m., historic preservation advocate, Abigail Jennings will present her vision for a new park in North Mecklenburg County. The program will begin promptly at 10:00, followed by our annual Christmas Tea and Luncheon. The new park will utilize the historic James Torrance Cedar Grove and the Hugh Torrance House and Store. This new concept promises to engage the public with a site that offers history and much more to attract visitors to return again and again.



Jennings' work in historic preservation includes landmarking many Mecklenburg County properties over the past twenty years, as well as successfully repurposing two historic landmarks in the National Register Historic Croft District for modern educational use. Most recently she spearheaded the landmarking of the Potts Barber Shop in Cornelius, NC. This building was the original business office for the Cornelius cotton mill, the site of the first known act of desegregation in the Town of Cornelius, and the oldest ongoing business continuously owned or operated by an African-American entrepreneur in Mecklenburg County. Jennings and her husband, Randolph Lewis, are currently restoring and rehabilitating the National Register William Speight McLean Davidson home, "Ingleside," in Huntersville, NC.

**Attendees:** Please be aware that Mecklenburg County continues to be under a mask mandate which states: "Individuals must wear Face Coverings when indoors in all offices, businesses, establishments, and other public places."

**Docents:** Please be at the church by **9:30** to arrange your dishes on the serving table. The board and hospitality committee will arrive at 9:00 to set up and decorate the tables. Everyone should bring a dish to share. We will be joined by our friends in the history community, so do be generous when planning your dish. You will be notified if anything changes.

We will again participate in the annual Toys for Tots program. If you would like to participate, please bring a new, unwrapped toy, and they will be donated to this worthy children's charity.



## *Feature Article*

### **MHA Docents African American Research Committee**

By Janet Dyer, MHA Docent

In the fall of 1994, the Mecklenburg Historical Association Docents established their African American research committee. The MHA Docents were actively involved with local historic sites. At the beginning of each year in the 1990's, local historic sites would submit requests for the MHA Docents as a group to help with their special events and/or programming. In addition, MHA Docents were volunteering as individuals at local sites. In 1993, when Historic Rosedale was asked to participate in the Mint Museum's exhibit "Classical Taste in America" as the architectural example of the period, the MHA Docent committee was asked by Rosedale's director to research and develop Historic Rosedale's training manual and tour for "Classical Taste in America" as well as conduct the tours. The MHA Docent committee expanded that commitment to developing and conducting 3<sup>rd</sup> grade school tours at Rosedale in 1995. Because of our involvement with local historic sites we realized that we needed more information about the lives of the enslaved people who lived in Mecklenburg County and to include that information in our interpretations.

At too many historic sites in the early 1990's, the interpretation of slavery consisted mostly of acknowledging that the original owners of the site did own slaves and naming some of the enslaved people. The purpose of the African American research committee was to "know more about enslaved people who lived in Mecklenburg County so we could more accurately and fully interpret their lives as an integral part of Mecklenburg history."

The members of the committee in 1996 were Karen McConnell (chair), Rachel Abernathy, Lynn Collins, Carolyn Dilda, Janet Dyer, Betty Hutchinson, Elizabeth Meyers, Betty Pierce and Carol Trippe. Over the years, other Docents became members. Volunteers and staff representing local historic sites also participated in the research, including Elizabeth Meyers and Duane Smith from Latta Plantation and Karen McConnell and Carol Trippe from Historic Rosedale.

The committee was especially looking for primary sources from Mecklenburg County – letters, wills, journals, estate sales, newspapers. Unfortunately nothing was found directly from enslaved persons who lived in Mecklenburg.

Resource sites visited included the Atkins Library at UNC Charlotte, the Carolina Room at the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Library, Duke University library, the Southern Collection at Wilson Library at UNC Chapel Hill, the North Carolina State Archives in Raleigh, Davidson College Library, and the South Carolina State Archives. Other research sources included Charlotte, NC antebellum newspapers, the 1837 journal of Sarah Frew Davidson and the account books of Dr. David Thomas Caldwell (1840's). The staff at Historic Rosedale interviewed descendants of the enslaved people from Rosedale.

How to interpret the research about the lives of enslaved people was also part of the committee's goals. The committee members visited different historic sites to explore their slave interpretations. In 1996, Mattye Reed, the founder of the African Cultural Center located on the North Carolina A&T campus, gave a presentation and allowed MHA Docents to examine many of her artifacts owned and/or made by enslaved persons. Her collection has been featured in exhibits throughout the country, including the Smithsonian.

Later that same year, we visited Booker T. Washington Memorial. Washington was born in 1856 on the Burroughs "plantation," a small tobacco farm of about 200 acres and 10 slaves. Small farms where owners and

slaves worked side by side were typical in the Carolina piedmont. The interpretation at the site emphasized everyday life and was a good example of how our research could be used. Another site visited was the Shenandoah Valley Folk Art and Heritage Center in Dayton, Va. where the staff led a frank discussion about their research and experience sharing accurate information about enslaved African Americans.

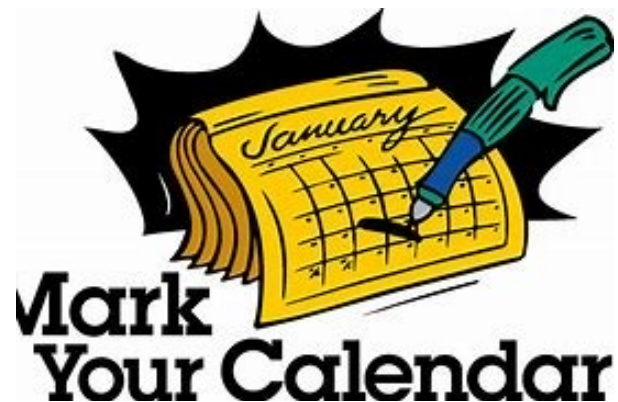
In April 2000, Historic Rosedale Docents and members of MHA Docent Africa American research committee went on a specially scheduled tour in Old Salem and met with Mel White, the director of African American programming on the interpretation of slavery in Old Salem. In the morning, costumed guide gave a tour of Old Salem and their enslaved African American families. In the afternoon, Mel White led a discussion of research, archeology, program development, sensitive interpretation techniques.

Information from the research of the MHA Docent African American research committee was shared with local sites throughout the committee's existence including Historic Rosedale, Latta Plantation, Hugh Torance House and Store, and President James K. Polk State Historic Site.

The Mecklenburg Historical Association Docents are in the process of publishing the original report of the African American research committee. The report is not a narrative but consists of quotes from published sources and primary source materials arranged by topics such as hiring out of slaves, local plantations, slave trade and sales, resistance to slavery, runaways, marriages, and social occasions. The primary source material is from the piedmont region of North and South Carolina. The 2021 report will include a history of the African American research committee, the original committee report including a bibliography, and addenda with articles about North Carolina slave laws, Mecklenburg County slave laws, facts and figures about slavery, and a slavery timeline. When the report is published, the Mecklenburg Historical Association Docents will provide information on how to obtaining a copy for anyone who is interested.

### *History Calendar*

The History Calendar has moved! For upcoming events and contact information, please see the History Calendar for this date on the MHA website, [meckdec.org](http://meckdec.org).





“Preserving Mecklenburg’s Heritage”

Mecklenburg Historical Association  
Post Office Box 35032  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28235

VISIT US ONLINE  
[WWW.MECKDEC.ORG](http://WWW.MECKDEC.ORG)

### *Membership Renewals*

If you have not renewed your MHA membership for 2021, you can do so now. Fill in the form, make your check payable to Mecklenburg Historical Association, and mail to:

Mecklenburg Historical Association      Post Office Box 35032      Charlotte, North Carolina 28235

Membership Category	Single	Couple
Senior Citizen (over 60)	\$15.00	\$25.00
General	\$30.00	\$50.00
Patron	\$60.00	\$100.00
Life (Single Payment)	\$300.00	\$500.00
Student	Free	N/A

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>City, State, ZIP</b>	
<b>E-Mail</b>	
<b>Phone</b>	

Please send my MHA Newsletter via:  
☐ Email (Please use this option if possible)  
☐ US Postal Mail  
☐ Both

If you have access to email, we prefer to send the newsletter to you that way. This saves considerable time and expense for MHA.

Membership type: (Please check one)  
☐ General Membership  
☐ MHA Docent Membership  
☐ North Branch MHA Membership

Thank you for your interest in history.