

Mecklenburg Historical Association

*Spreading Knowledge of our History
like the Down of a Dandelion*
<http://www.meckdec.org/>

Volume 30, no 1
Spring 2024



From the President
by Sarah Sue Hardinger

We are 15 months from the 250th anniversary of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence and 28 months from the 250th anniversary of our country. MHA has many projects underway to honor these events. In this issue, you will read about several of the events that are happening this spring. In future issues, you will find more about each of the projects as they near completion. Please check the bottom of the pages of our website for projects in which we are seeking help. The anniversaries will mean much more for you if you have lent a hand.

With this issue, we are starting a series of biographies of signers of the MeckDec. We will concentrate on those who are lesser known. In spring of 2025, we will release a book covering all 27 signers and a few more folks related to MeckDec, such as Captain James Jack. If you are a descendant of one of the signers and would like to contribute the biography of your ancestor, please send a note via Contact on the website.

We are also working on a book on the founding churches of Mecklenburg County. If you are the



historian of one of the churches founded before the Revolution, please contact us the same way.

Which brings me to our new website! Same address, much more extensive content and [**You Can Pay Your Membership and Purchase your dinner on line!!!!**](#)

Some categories of membership cost a bit more starting March 1. Dinners are \$15 for this meeting but need to go to \$20 with the May meeting in order to cover increased costs. We have noted for about a year that the cost of producing a printed copy of this newsletter is exceptionally high so with this issue we are going all digital. If you know someone who has been receiving a printed copy, please print one for them or have them send a note to us.

I usually say a few words about the speaker of our next Dinner Meeting, but you will need to read the article below for yourself, since I am the speaker.

Hope to see you there.

Sarah Sue

MHA Announcement

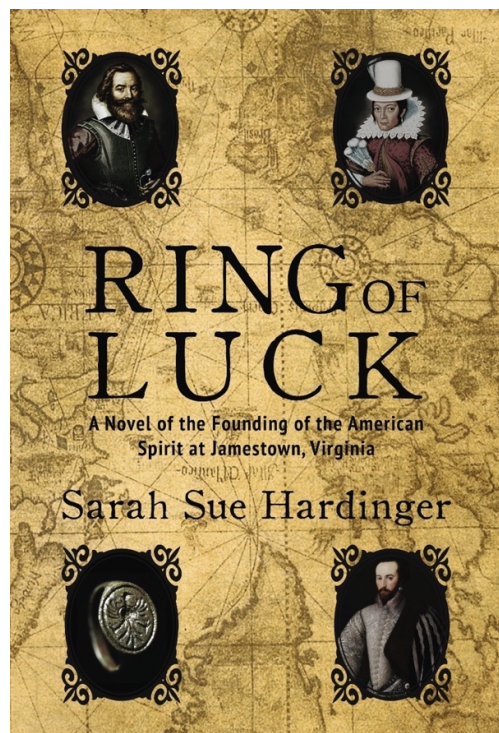
Spring MHA Dinner Meeting

The MHA Spring Dinner Meeting will be held at Trinity Presbyterian Church on March 18, 2024. The subject will be the founding years of Jamestown, Virginia and its connection with Mecklenburg County. Since the 1990s, archaeology at the site of the original fort and the town that grew from it has offered new insights into the lives and relationships of the original 100+ men and the immigrants who followed them.

In her factional novel, Ring of Luck, Sarah Sue Hardinger explores the first twelve years in light of this new information, giving life and character to familiar names such as John Smith, John Rolfe and Pocahontas. And, believe it or not, there is a connection between early Jamestown and Mecklenburg County.

As usual, the dinner starts at 6:30 and the presentation around 7:15. The presentation is free. If you wish to order dinner, which is boxed dinners from Jason's Deli, please go to our website and reserve your dinner.

Please note, you need to pay for the dinner AND select which dinner choice you want. If at all possible, please use the website. If you are unable to use the website, you can call Jane Johnson at 704-307-8097.



Dates Set for All Four Dinner Meetings in 2024

Mark your calendars!

MHA will host four dinner meetings in 2024 on **Mar 18, May 13, September 16 and November 18.**

MHA Newsletter Dandelion Article Submission Deadlines

The deadline for submitting articles to the Winter issue of the MHA Newsletter Dandelion is Friday, February 23, 2024. Please send articles to Sarah Sue Hardinger at news@meckdec.com. Please put the words MHA Article in the subject line.

Spring Historic Site Tour – Save the Date

**MHA
Spring Tour
2024**



May 4 & 5 10-4 \$40

Over 20 historic sites exist along or near 6 miles of Beatties Ford Road from Hwy 73 to Mt Holly- Huntersville Road. Half or more will be open for guided tours. Visit Mecklenburg Historical Association at meckdec.org for details and tickets.

Some of you enjoyed the Historic Sites Tour earlier last spring featuring sites in both Lincoln and Mecklenburg Counties. The driving distances for that tour were long. On May 4&5, MHA will host a tour of sites only on the west side of Huntersville. In fact, almost all the locations will be along a six-mile stretch of Beatties Ford Road.

We have identified over 20 sites of interest dating from before the Revolution through the early 20th century. About half of the sites will have guided tours. The others are self-guided or drive-by sites.

Tickets will be available April 1 on our website.

This is a fund-raising event for MHA. Please come see sites that are rarely or never available and support the MHA.

News

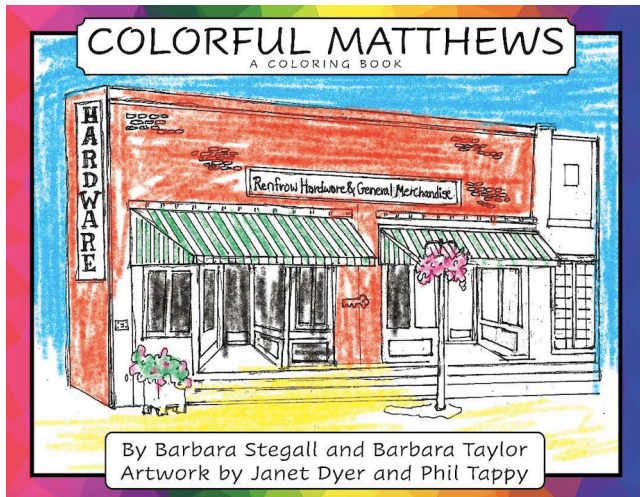
Colorful Matthews Debuts

The brainchild of Barbara Taylor and Barbara Stegall, Colorful Matthews is the first in a series of coloring books designed to highlight landmarks of the towns in Mecklenburg County.

Colorful Matthews features 15 original pen and ink drawings of historic

structures. The pictures are followed by information about each building. Every page is perforated, and the 8 ½ x 11 format makes it easy to frame. Books will be sold at the Chamber of Commerce (Depot), Moxie Mercantile and Renfrow's Hardware or order online at the website www.meckdec.org.

Get a Signed Copy March 8
from 2 to 4 pm. Renfrow's
Hardware
Other times to be announced



North Trade Street Buildings

For more information: Please
contact Barbara Taylor at
Btaylor797@aol.com or Barbara
Stegall at Basteg321@gmail.com or
write to PO Box 1564, Matthews,
NC 28106.

Voices From The Past

– April 6, 11am-3pm

Historic Elmwood Pinewood Cemetery (700
W. 6th St.) and Settlers' Cemetery
(200 W 5th St.)

Voices From The Past is a living history event with over 40 costumed portrayers who share with our guests the amazing stories of the men and women who helped make Charlotte what it is today. When you visit a gravesite, you see the birth date and death date with a “dash” in between engraved on the tombstone. The "dash" is their life and those are the stories we tell.

Enjoy the afternoon with live music from the Charlotte Folk Society, food trucks, beer vendor, cotton candy, and four special guests located in our new Historian Authors tent! Complimentary golf cart rides, provided by Queen City Rides, are available in Elmwood and Pinewood Cemeteries and a shuttle with C-Charlotte Tours will take you between Settlers' and Elmwood.

Tickets are on sale now for \$10. Children under 12 are free. Learn more and purchase tickets by visiting www.voicesfromthepastcharlotte.com.

This Is Meck: Mecklenburg 250 Festival – April 20

North Carolina will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the United States with wide-ranging activities across a multi-year commemoration. The goal is to empower North Carolinians to engage with 250 years of our rich, diverse history. Under the recommendation of America 250 North Carolina, the Mecklenburg 250 stakeholders committee was established in June 2023 and is in the strategic planning phase while awaiting an official commission from Mecklenburg County.

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation has already begun planning kickoff events. To celebrate the department's 50th anniversary, *This Is Meck: Mecklenburg 250* Festival will take place on **Saturday, April 20, 2024, from 10 am to 2 pm in Independence Park (300 Hawthorne Lane).**

Hosted by Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation in partnership with Trail of History, the festival will feature history programming & education by local partners, music, artists, community outreach organizations, food, and beverage. There is no participation cost.

MeckDec Day Celebration

May 20th falls on Monday in 2024. Mark your calendars for the annual Meck Dec Day program at Trade and Tryon at high noon. The usual program is speakers, reading of the MeckDec, formal volleys of Revolutionary era weapons and a short parade to Settler's Cemetery where wreaths will be laid on the grave of founder Thomas Polk.

The annual dinner will be held at Old Mecklenburg Brewery on Wednesday, May 22 at 6 pm. Watch our monthly History Calendar for details on the dinner and other events.

Story Corps Is Coming to Charlotte – April 25 – May 24, 2024



The StoryCorps Mobile Tour will be in the Charlotte area this year!

StoryCorps records conversations between friends or relatives and stores them in the Library of Congress American Folklife Center. The participants also receive a copy. The goal is to allow future generations to hear the stories and voices of today. Did you ever wish you could hear your grandfather's voice or know if your great grandmother had an accent? Would you like to hear your great uncle tell of his time as a doctor in the Spanish American war? By recording an interview now, your great grandchildren would have that kind of opportunity.

In 2005, StoryCorps converted an Airstream trailer into a traveling recording studio and launched its first cross-country tour. Each year, they visit cities and towns across the country to record the conversations between people who live there. They partner with local public radio stations (WFAE), cultural institutions, and community-based organizations (MHA) to get the word out and invite participants to visit the StoryCorps Mobile Tour.

Their goal is to make the StoryCorps recording experience accessible to all and conversations can be recorded in any language.

As we get more details about time and place and how to sign up to record an interview, we will put that information in our April and May calendars. We encourage anyone and everyone to seriously consider being part of this decade-old project. You will be doing yourself and future generations a big favor.

Listen. Honor. Share.

New Bain School Monument in Mint Hill

Established in 1889 by John Bain, rebuilt after a fire in 1903, and redesigned as a two-story brick structure in 1924, the school was a part of the Mint Hill fabric until it was demolished in 2020.

The monument in honor of the school was designed by AIA Architect Stefan Pienkny (a member of the Preserve Mecklenburg Board), the monument features handmade bricks from the Bain building, arranged in a V shape to resemble an open book. On the left panel are a bronze plaque honoring John Bain, who founded the school in 1889, and the cornerstone from the building, redesigned by AIA Architect Louis Asbury in 1924. On the right panel is a bronze plaque featuring a short history of the school and its lasting impact on the Mint Hill community.



Photo by Dave Martinson

FUN FACT: Mint Hill was established in 1750, 18 years before Charlotte.

Kay Moss Receives Order of the Long Leaf Pine



Kay Kincaid Moss was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine at a celebration Saturday, February 10, 2024, at Covenant Village, Gastonia, NC. Dr. Ann Tippitt, Executive Director of The Schiele Museum, Jennie Stultz, former Mayor of Gastonia, and Sandy Thomas, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, made the official presentation.

The Order of the Long Leaf Pine is among the most prestigious awards issued by the Governor of North Carolina. This award is presented to individuals who have a proven record of extraordinary service to the state.

Receiving the Long Leaf Pine award stands as affirmation of the diverse cultural and environmental legacy Kay Moss has given to North Carolina and the southeastern region as an author, educator, historical interpreter, extensive researcher of NC heritage, environmental advocate, and numerous affiliations & volunteer activities.

Founder of the 18th-C Backcountry Lifeways program, Kay was known for Wild Foods Festivals, Earth Day events and featured exhibits such as: "Journey to the Piedmont Past" and "When You See This Remember Me" (18th-C handcrafted arts).

For fifteen years she was Instructor, Historic and Open-Hearth Cooking at JC Campbell Folk School.

Kay Moss has been an invaluable researcher, historian and cook for the last 30 years or so, teaching, exploring and encouraging others to learn the history, foodways and culture of the North Carolina backcountry. Her cookbook, "The Backcountry Housewife" along with "Seeking the historical cook" are invaluable tools to anyone interested in foodways of the backcountry. She has helped the cooking guild numerous times with workshops, instruction and friendship;

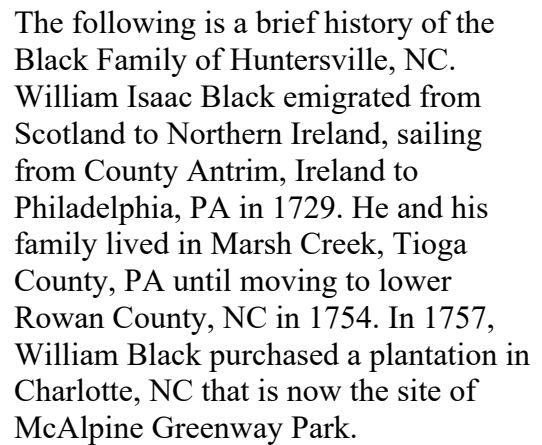
The Historic Cooking Guild of the Catawba Valley was asked to provide light refreshments. The members decided the best way to honor Mrs. Moss was to use receipts found in her books. They made Ginger cakes, Sugared almonds, Shortbread and a Hedgehog for a centerpiece at the reception. It was a busy day, but the results were so worth it.

We would like to extend our congratulations to her and say a thank you for all you have taught, helped and encouraged the Cooking Guild.



History of Lesser-Known Mecklenburg Families

By Amanda Pittman



Deweese Township. 1911



The Black Family 1910

William's son, John Black, Sr., received a land grant for 200 acres in Charlotte in 1766. He was a lieutenant in the Revolutionary War in McCrory's Company. John was one of the founders of Sardis Presbyterian Church in Charlotte in 1790. Upon his death, he willed 216 acres of land to his son, John Black, Jr. John Jr. became a Mecklenburg County surveyor in 1806 and purchased 749 acres of land in 1823 on what is now Black Farms Road. The property was passed to his son, James Meek Black, who farmed corn and cotton, and raised hogs.



Charles Grier Black. 1891-1972



The Black Family. 1930

The farm then passed to James' son, John Calvin Black, who built a farmhouse in 1861, which still stands today. John fought in the War Between the States, North Carolina 37th Regiment, Company C, along with his younger brother, future father-in-law, and others who would join their family trees with his in later generations. With the passing of the farm to John's son, Charles Grier Black, Sr., the family converted to dairy farming. This it remained as it passed to Grier's son, John F. Black in 1973. It ultimately became a beef cattle farm before passing to John's son, J.E. Black in 2019. Black Farm has the distinction of being the oldest farm on record in Mecklenburg County, having passed continually from father to son while continuously being farmed by 7 generations of the family for 200 years.



The Black Farm thenand now.

In a paralleling branch of the family tree, the Black Family members are the grandchildren of such notable historic figures of this area as Captain Matthew McClure (a signer of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence), Captain James Franklin Houston (wounded in the Revolutionary War Battle of Ramsour's Mill), John McConnell (a Revolutionary War patriot), Hezekiah Deweese who fought in the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, the Kerns (Kearns) Family who were connected by marriage with the Hugh Torance Family, and the Knox Family who were connected by marriage to both the Torance Family and the James Latta Family.

Signers of the *MeckDec*

In the spring of next year, the MHA will release a new biography of all of the signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration and others related to it. There have been several books on this subject over the years, but it has been almost 70 years since the last and we now probably know more about these people than the authors did in earlier versions. Ancestry and other genealogical sources have made data available online that was not available then.

As we develop the stories of some of the lesser-known signers, we will print them here as we build up the entire text. In this issue we feature John Foard and Ezra Alexander.

John Foard

by Rev. Laura Alexander Elliott

John Fo(a)rd was born circa 1727 in Ireland, from which he then emigrated to the American Colonies. Records show he married Catherine Robinette in 1749, they had two children, and then migrated southward from colonial Maryland in the 1760's, along with his two brothers, and many other Scots-Irish Presbyterians who traversed the Great Wagon Road from Maryland and Pennsylvania during the 18th Century. The three brothers stayed briefly in Virginia, and then John took his family on into North Carolina where many were settling the peaceful and fertile piedmont region between the Yadkin and Catawba Rivers.

From that time until his recorded death in April of 1798, John Fo(a)rd worked as a surveyor, including the significant work of laying out Lawyers Road, now on the outskirts of Charlotte; joined the local Clear Creek Militia Company as early as 1766 and served as a sergeant; purchased nearly 400 acres from Lord Selwyn in 1767 along a branch of the Sugar Creek in Mecklenburg County—where he built his original log house—and later around 1788, several one-acre plots on Tryon Street in the newly established county seat of Charlotte; signed his name to the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence on May 20, 1775; was named a County Magistrate among those called from Mecklenburg to the first North Carolina state convention to craft a State Constitution in 1776; fought the Tories on horseback as part of the Raft Swamp Expedition during the Revolution; hosted renowned war General Nathaniel Greene at his homestead which was by then the Fo(a)rd Plantation; and served as a Founding Elder for what became known as the Philadelphia Presbyterian Church in Mint Hill, where his descendants still to this day gather every September for the Foard/Ford Family Reunion.

The debate about the spelling of Fo(a)rd is long standing, even within John's family heritage, but the published family history book from which the information herein is drawn, specifies that when the Foard brothers arrived near the Virginia/Carolina border—and then went their separate ways—they agreed to put the 'a' in their name in order to honor their Scottish heritage and to distinguish themselves from other "Fords." In addition, as a signatory of the MeckDec, John Foard's name appears on that historic document with the 'a' included.

(Based upon information from a volume entitled "John Foard Family," researched and written by members of the family (descendants of fifth generation Jesse Crawford Foard), and published in Charlotte, NC, 1982.)

Ezra Alexander (Feb. 26, 1740 - July 6, 1800)

By Rev. Dr. Laura Alexander Elliott

Ezra Alexander was one of the six signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence from the Alexander family. Although perhaps lesser known than his relatives John McKnitt, Hezekiah, and Abraham Alexander, Ezra was the brother of Abraham and was married to Mary Polk, who was related to Thomas Polk, another signer and considered a principal founder of the City of Charlotte.

Like his Alexander kin, he had been born in Maryland and traveled south with family to settle in Mecklenburg County. He and his wife Mary had eight children: Eleazer, James, Dorcas, Abdon, Augustus, Paris, Redempta and Polly Ann.

Ezra fought in the Continental Army in several battles, including at Ramsour's Mill, and was promoted to the rank of Captain. After the Revolutionary War, he became Overseer of Roads in 1778, and also served on the Committee of Safety. Like his cousin Hezekiah, he owned property at Little Sugaw Creek and was involved with that community and church. He also acquired land in Tennessee through his wife's family—the Polks—who relocated there from North Carolina and famously spawned a future President of the United States—James K. Polk. Ezra Alexander and many of his kin, are acknowledged historic enslavers of African-Americans.

One of the more interesting features of Ezra's life story is that—like the President and author of the American Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson—he was a Diest whose religion was not based upon a personal or supernaturally intervening God, but one who stands apart from humankind at a distance. He died on July 6, 1800, just as the new nation was entering a new century.

Food, Fire and Family

by Susie Worcester

One of the many things that baffle me about historical clothing is something so simple yet complex, the pocket worn by women.

I love pockets! Whether in jeans, slacks, skirts, dresses or sweaters, I own very few pieces of clothing that don't have pockets and am guilty of adding pockets to pocketless items. I use my pockets as most people do to hold keys, money, candy, receipts, scraps of paper and various other items. If it fits in a modern pocket, I will put it in one.

However, when I started this historical food and cooking hobby, wearing my modern clothes wasn't going to work, so I began my journey into 18th century fashion, focusing on the backcountry of NC. I had visions of linen skirts (later learned to call them petticoats) with side pockets. I was surprised to find there were no side pockets but large pockets attached with ribbon or tape which were tied around the waist of the woman, under the outer petticoat yet above the under petticoat, stays or shift. Some were made with one pocket, others with two, all had an opening that allowed the woman access to what she had placed inside. This was going to be an interesting journey.

Pockets were worn by women whether they were upper class, lower class, socialite or working class. The fabric used to make pockets also varied according to affordability, economy and material. A wealthy woman may wear a fine silk pocket while a working woman may have one made of sturdier material such as leather, wool or heavy linen. The edge and opening of pockets were bound with ribbon or tape making it easy to replace worn out layers.

What fascinated me about the extant pockets I found, was the sometimes elaborate embroidery found on the face of the pocket. I quickly came to realize that 18th century women wanted something pretty and fine just as we do today. This was one way she could show off her skills as a seamstress though it is sad to think that they were seldom seen by others.

The shape of the general pocket seemed to have changed little during the 18th century. Pockets could be long, narrow at the top but bigger at the bottom, shorter and wider, triangular in shape, or more oval in shape. Some were made with scraps of available fabric, as I have come to find in my research that little was wasted. It does seem that wearing two pockets was preferred over wearing one.

In planning the size and shape of my pockets, I had to think about what I would really need them for. Keys, general stuff, maybe a cell phone, all standard items of today. But what about the 18th century woman? What did she put in hers? Finding a list of items found in pockets during this time was difficult, so I was left with my own imagination. Her pockets might have held keys to doors or cabinets in her home, a handkerchief, a small day book and pencil, maybe a small sewing kit for mending, a small tin of ointment, hair ribbons, string, a pair of scissors, or a few coins. Was there a small rock tucked away, given to her by a small child or a feather from a bird. Did her children think her pockets were treasure chests?

Pockets worn by the working merchants probably held coins they earned selling their wares. This was a time when men generally controlled the money, so having a few coins in her possession would have been a source of pride. Women merchants may have worn their pockets over their outer petticoats for easy access.

The everyday wearing of pockets assured that they would eventually wear out or need mending. This was a common practice in most households though in some of the wealthier families, a seamstress may be employed to do the mending and darning. It is hard to imagine that a beautifully embroidered pocket face would be thrown out. New linings and backs were added, patches sewn on and small holes darned. Would these pieces of history be handed down to future generations?

Were women's pockets really an important part of daily life in the 18th century? I say yes! Families moving to the backcountry, setting up households with limited furniture and utensils, would have needed a safe repository for keys to cabinets used to keep their belongs safe, necessary sewing implements or a tin of ointment, or maybe small biscuits to feed a hungry child or husband. Just as we do today, women then wanted to keep their treasures and needed supplies close.

I wonder if pockets had a part in helping with the Revolutionary War efforts. Did women hide secret missives in their pockets? I could find no evidence that they did, but it does seem like a good place to hide secret papers that need to be saved and delivered. Small bibles or important documents were often placed in a woman's pockets especially for the lower working class. Papers of reference may be asked for by future employers and such papers were important.

Putting on a pair of pockets can be a bit tricky. Be sure to put them on before the outer petticoat. Trust me on this. I try to tie them on the side since there are so many tapes to tie on when you start adding the layers of petticoats. Also, check for alignment of the slit in the petticoat and that you can access the pocket opening. Tying them on with the opening against your skin is not a good idea. Trying to wear less in the summer by not wearing your pockets will have you searching for a safe place to hide car keys and such.

There are a few good books about 18th century women's fashion and pockets. *Patterns of Fashion* by Janet Arnold now includes 6 different books published by The School of Historical Dress. It is an excellent source and includes reproducible patterns. *The Pocket, A Hidden History of Women's Lives* by Barbara Burman, is an excellent source on pockets.

There are no records of the first pockets, though they were worn from the 17th century through the 18th century, fell out of favor in the early 19th century but returned through the later part of the 19th century. As garments became more commercially available and sewing machines invented, pockets were sewn into the skirt, dress or coat. Separate tie-on pockets would fade out into the pages of history.

My own pockets are starting to wear, and I will probably start thinking about making another pair, but I will put more thought into how they will be made and used. They are only worn a few times each month, but they represent to me the struggles, lives and treasures of the women who came before me.



Ugly Brown Soap

by Barb Bray

We first met at Cordell Hull Birthplace State Historic Park in Byrdstown, Tennessee on August 15th to make soap. Monique, the Park Manager, had some experience with making cold process soap, but I was a novice. We thought the entire soap making process would only take about 3-4 hours, so we started rendering the white chunks of pig fat in a pan on the stove. We added some water to the fat so it wouldn't burn. We sat down and waited. And waited. And waited.

To our surprise, the 5 pounds of pig fat took 3 1/2 hours to render! It took so long that we decided to meet another day. In the meantime, both of us were going to look up more resources on soap making.

Soap making, of course, is nothing new. The history of soap goes back to around 5000 years ago in Sumeria, where a cuneiform tablet described the first documented use of soap. The tablet, dating to 2800 B.C. describes the manufacturing of soap in the city of Girsu for use in the wool industry. Soap was used to wash out the lanolin so the wool could be dyed. The discovery of soap likely was made by a woman working in Sumeria's textile industry. Although soap is not mentioned prior to this, people were using ashes to clean butchering tools. It would be nearly a thousand years later before people start using soap to clean their skin.

Since I am a historical cook, I knew I could find some advice in 18th and 19th century cookery books. Mary Randolph said in the Virginia Housewife, 1824, "to each gallon (of lye), add three quarters of a pound of clean grease: boil it very fast, and stir it frequently." Lydia Child also mentions boiling the soap. Miss Leslie (1837) mentions adding concentrated lye in a box to boiling water and mixing in 5 pounds of clear fat and 2 gallons of water, then boiling "with a slow fire until the biting taste of the soap liquid has disappeared, which can be easily told by tasting a little with the tongue from off the end of your finger..." What could possibly go wrong?

We built the fire, set up the pole to hang the cast iron pot, and had our lye and lard ready to go. Then I dropped a tablespoon of the lard into the pot. It sizzled angrily and then burst into flame! We let the pot cool down. Then I tested another spoonful of lard, and it melted without catching fire! It seemed to be okay, so we added the rest of the lard. By this time, the lye solution had cooled down to 100 degrees, so we slowly added a little bit to the pot. It started to sizzle and bubble about halfway up the pot's sides. As we stirred, the mixture in the pot started turning brown. We slowly added the remaining lye solution, and then cooked the mixture for about 2 1/2 hours. Following the 19th century instructions, we let the soap boil gently in the pot. Temperature readings ranged between 179-233 degrees the entire time.

Monique and I weren't sure how to tell when the soap was ready to load into molds. I had read in one of the historic sources that the soap would look like mashed potatoes. Monique said that the soap would take on a "shiny" appearance. Eventually, the soap looked like shiny brown mashed potatoes. We scooped them into a 12-inch silicone soap mold, and I took it home to set. I cut it into 12 bars the next day. Hot processed soap is supposed to be ready to use after 24 hours, but neither of us trusted the soap, so we didn't try it until about a month later. It lathered but felt a little bit greasy.

I think our first soap making adventure over fire was successful. Although historic accounts mention boiling the mixture, I don't think they really meant "boiling". A slow fire, or even better, some hot coals under a cast iron pot would likely yield a better-looking soap. I think we scorched our soap mixture at the very beginning of the process. Keep the heat low and stir for a long time. If you don't, you just might make Ugly Brown Soap too!

References

Cassidy, Cody. 2020. Who Discovered Soap? What to Know About the Origins of the Life-Saving Substance; Time.com/soap origins

Child, Lydia. 1833. The American Frugal Housewife.

Leslie, Eliza. 1837. Directions for Cookery; Being a System of the Art, In Its Various Branches

Randolph, Mary. 1824. The Virginia Housewife: Or Methodical Cook

Historical Cooking Guild of the Catawba Valley: Update and Recipe

by Susie Worcester

History of Historical Cooking Guild of the Catawba Valley

The Historical Cooking Guild of the Catawba Valley was started in 1997 by Carollyn Dilda and Barbara Goodwin. They would soon acquire new members, Sharon Van Kuren, Janet Dyer and Mary Godsey. Meetings were later held at James K. Polk Birthplace in Pineville, NC. Over the next 26 years, they would add new members Linda Beverly, Cathy Davis, Pam Dubeck, Linda Gedney and Audrey Mellichamp, along with others.

The Guild is committed to presenting foodways of the 18th century to the public through dress, cooking receipts, social events, programs and methods of preparing and preserving food found in early cookbooks and manuscripts of the North Carolina backcountry area, which is their main area of focus. Cooking is only the beginning of the work the Guild does, they do endless hours of research on topics and procedures pertaining to 18th century foodways. They often consider availability, seasonality, economics, social standing, and religious beliefs when researching receipts to be as true to the period as possible.

The Guild has shared their love of 18th century food and expertise with others through teaching at ALHFAM (The Association for Living History. Farm and agricultural Museums) workshops, participating in the Edenton Tea Party, working as a test kitchen for author William Rubel's "Magic of Fire" cookbook, won the Polk State Historical Site (SHS) "Young Hickory Award", helped numerous Girl Scout troops learn about 18th century cooking and foodways plus educating endless school groups at the Polk SHS.

Currently the Guild is taking a break from monthly meetings at Polk and are meeting at a member's house where the research and cooking is continuing to fulfill the ladies of the Cooking Guild's curiosity for knowledge and a better understanding of the lives of men, women, children, and food of the 18th century.

RECEIPT - CHOCOLATE PUFFS

Having beat and sifted half a pound of double-refined sugar, scrape into it an ounce of chocolate very fine, and mix them together. Beat the white of an egg to a very high froth, and strew in the sugar and chocolate. Keep beating it till it is as stiff as a paste. Then sugar the paper, drop them on the size of a sixpence, and bake them in a very slow oven .

From "The London Art of Cookery" by John Farley, 1811, page 269.

RECEIPT - BEGGAR'S PUDDING

(This is in "The Universal Cook" by John Townsends 1773. I don't have that book and have pieced this receipt together by watching Townsends video, also found a receipt in John Adam's online site.)

Take stale bread, about a bowl full, break it up and pour over it hot water, about pint to pint and half. Set and let soak. Break up bread and squeeze out extra water. Add small amount of ginger, nutmeg, some sugar, some currants, and half a gill of Sake, mix well Butter the pan and press bread mixture into pan, pat top with butter and bake in a quick oven.

From "The Universal Cook" by John Townsends, 1773.



"Preserving Mecklenburg's Heritage"

VISIT US ONLINE

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

MHA Dues Membership Renewals ***You can now pay for your Membership or Renewal on our website!***

Now is the time to renew your MHA membership for 2024. Our fiscal year runs from Jan 1 to Dec 31.

Current Members: Please complete all sections of the form below so that we can ensure your contact information is accurate and complete. Write your check in the amount based on membership level and make it payable to "Mecklenburg Historical Association." Mail check and completed form to the address below. If you are not certain about the status of your membership, send an email to membership@meckdec.org for verification.

New Members: Payment to any of the levels of membership listed below (except Life) entitles membership to the MHA for one calendar year (Jan.1st – Dec.31st).

Please complete all sections of the form below so that we can ensure your contact information is accurate and complete. Write your check in the amount based on membership level and make it payable to "Mecklenburg Historical Association." Mail check and completed form to:

**Mecklenburg Historical Association
P. O. Box 35032
Charlotte, NC 28235**

You can now pay for your Membership or Renewal on our website!
meckdec.org/store/

MHA Membership Form:

Levels of Membership	Single	Couple	Contact Information
Senior (60+)	\$20.00	\$30.00	Name: _____
General	\$40.00	\$60.00	Address: _____
Patron	\$60.00	\$100.00	City, State, Zip: _____
Life (single payment)	\$300.00	\$500.00	Phone: _____
Student	free	n/a	Email: _____

You will receive notice that your MHA Newsletter is available on the website when it is published.

If you have absolutely no access to email or our website, please indicate that here. One of the Board members will make a copy on their printer, staple it and mail it to you. _____