

Newsletter of the  
**Mecklenburg  
Historical Association**

Volume 29    Number 1  
Spring 2023

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



"Preserving Mecklenburg's Heritage"

## From the President



We begin another year of exploring, preserving, and celebrating our amazing Mecklenburg history with dinner meetings in March, May, September, and November. Your Board of Directors will have a Board meeting on March 14th to continue planning for MHA. Please see the March 20th dinner meeting information elsewhere in this newsletter and send in your reservation. The 250th year of Mecklenburg history is coming soon and will include special programs and celebrations. Please let us know if you would like to assist in the 250th planning.

There are so many events and opportunities coming up this spring. Voice From the Past is back at Elmwood/Pinewood and Settlers Cemeteries on April 1. You can learn more about the plants in your yard and help bring one of our premier historic sites back closer to its original look. And you can see many of the historic places in our area that are seldom open to the public on the Lincoln Landmarks Historic Homes Tour on April 28 and 29. Browse the articles for more.

MeckDec Day, May 20<sup>th</sup>, is on Saturday this year! If you have never been to the celebration dinner, bike race, or gathering at Trade and Tyron at noon, you have a treat in store. Check out the article in this issue for more details.

Please also send in your MHA membership renewal (form included in this newsletter). Your membership and your support are needed to keep MHA strong. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Hope to see you all on March 20th at Trinity Presbyterian for our dinner meeting.

Best regards to each of you,

Linda Dalton

## MHA Spring Dinner Program - "Black and White Women in the Old South"

The MHA will hold its Spring program featuring



Dr. Sally G. McMillen on Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup>. Dr McMillen retired in 2016 as the Mary Reynolds Babcock Professor of History at Davidson College. She specialized in the nineteenth-

century American South and American women's history. McMillen will give a presentation on "Black and White Women in the Old South." She is the author of several scholarly articles and five monographs, most recently *Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women's Rights Movement* and *Lucy Stone: An*

*Unapologetic Life*. Sally won the 2000 Hunter Hamilton Love of Teaching Award, the first winner of the Boswell Family Fellowship, and a recipient of a National Endowment of the Humanities research award. Currently she and husband Bruce live in Davidson's St. Albans neighborhood. They are parents of son Blair, who lives in New York City, and daughter Carrie, residing in Acton, Massachusetts, and grandparents of Conor, Sarah, and Anna. For fun, she loves to walk, hike, travel, watch movies and Davidson basketball and volleyball, play word games, learn to play the cello, and, most importantly, spend time with family and friends.

**See page 7 for the dinner program and reservation coupon.**

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## Don't Let Us Be Spam!

The Mecklenburg Historical Association will cease using MailChimp as its mass email delivery platform on March 2, 2023. Zoho will be the new mass email delivery platform for sending all MHA communications beginning April 1, 2023.

This migration was needed due to changes in MailChimp's pricing structure. Beginning April 1<sup>st</sup>, recipients will now receive emails with "Mecklenburg Historical Association" or "[mha-news@meckdec.org](mailto:mha-news@meckdec.org)" in the sender field of their email header.

**Those subscribers who use SPAM filters for their email accounts** need to include the following exceptions in their filter to prevent any possible disruption of service receiving future emails in the inbox from the MHA:

"Mecklenburg Historical Association"  
"[mha-news@meckdec.org](mailto:mha-news@meckdec.org)"  
"Mecklenburg Historical Association <[mhanews@meckdec.org](mailto:mhanews@meckdec.org)>"

**There should be no need for concern if you do not use spam filtering for your email account.** You will continue to receive monthly issues of the MHA Monthly Event Calendar on the 1st of each month unless otherwise notified. Thank you for your time, attention, and understanding.

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## Voices From the Past

*By Lynn Mintzer*

Voices From the Past, where Charlotte's history comes alive for the day, is happening again this year.

Presented by Historic Elmwood/Pinewood Inc. and the Mecklenburg Historical Association, our interpreters will be representing notables from Charlotte's history on April 1, 2023 from 1– 4 PM.

Enter at Elmwood Cemetery, 700 W. 6<sup>th</sup> St.



Take this quick test to see how well you know just a few of the “residents” being portrayed in Elmwood and Pinewood cemeteries.

(You'll find the answers at Voices From the Past.)

- Who was the “Razor Girl”?
- Who was JCSU named after and why?
- Who was the richest man in upstate SC in the 1850s?
- Who was Charles Samuel Lafayette Alexander Taylor?
- Who were the first female Editor of a newspaper in the country, the first female attorney in Charlotte and the first female physician in North Carolina and probably in the South?

To volunteer and for more information visit [Voices From the Past](#).

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## Meck Dec Day 2023

The celebration of the Mecklenburg Declaration, Meck Dec Day, has expanded over the years to include a dinner on the 19<sup>th</sup> with an excellent speaker and a bike race on the 21<sup>st</sup> as well as the noon festivities at Trade and Tryon on the anniversary, May 20<sup>th</sup>. Since May 20<sup>th</sup> is a Saturday this year, the number of costumed reenactors in attendance should be larger than usual. It is always exciting to hear the cannons echoing through the skyscraper canyons.

Details have not yet been posted, but check on the May 20<sup>th</sup> Society website or Facebook page in a few weeks for the entire schedule and access to tickets for the dinner. [May 20<sup>th</sup> Society](#).



**Sat, Mar 25**  
**Mar 25, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Hugh Torance House and Store**

8231 Gilead Road  
 Huntersville, NC 28078

Join us to learn about invasive vs native species, and help remove invasive species from our historic site grounds. Please bring work gloves, hand spades, and pruners. RSVPs are required for lunch. Pizza and drinks for volunteers at 12:00 PM.

[RSVP](#)

## Lincoln Landmarks Hosts Homes Tour

LINCOLN LANDMARKS  
*Home & Garden*  
 TOUR OF HOMES  
**APRIL 28 & 29, 2023**  
 TICKETS \$40 at [LINCOLNLANDMARKS.COM](http://LINCOLNLANDMARKS.COM)  
*Wine Auction* FRIDAY NIGHT, APRIL 28 TICKETS \$10  
AT PLEASANT RETREAT FULL TOUR INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT LINCOLNLANDMARKS.COM

 <i>Century Grove</i>	 <i>Woodside</i>	 <i>Inglewood</i>
 <i>Vesuvius</i>	 <i>Reinhardt Cherry</i>	 <i>Peacock Hill</i>
 <i>Pleasant Retreat</i>	 <i>Machpelah</i>	 <i>Graham Barn</i>
 <i>Hugh Torance</i>	 <i>Laboratory Mill</i>	 <i>Holly Bend</i>

Lincoln Landmarks, a young and vibrant group supporting the rich history of Lincoln County, NC, is hosting a tour of homes and other sites in both Lincoln County and western Mecklenburg County on April 28 and 29. Some are grounds tours only, but most of the homes will be open. The information you will receive with your ticket will give background on each site and docents will be available. Tickets for the tour are \$40 each. The event continues with a wine party and auction on Friday evening for \$10 per ticket.

Tickets are available at [Lincoln Landmarks](http://LincolnLandmarks.com).



**Connor Corner***By Michael Connor*

*(This is a continuing series of articles on notable families of Mecklenburg County who you may not have heard about. The Connor family, of John Connor Road, is filled with characters who have achieved prominence in their fields and some who are famous for their personality. Michael Connor, professor, actor, docent, and family historian, has collected a mound of stories about his relatives and has been kind enough to share some. In our Winter Issue, we began the story of the Connors, a family that has been part of north Mecklenburg County for generations. This Spring we pick up the tale with Margaret and some of her descendants. - ed.)*

I have only been able to trace three of Margaret's children and the youngest was my great grandfather, Cheeseman Monroe Connor. Although her parents were both Africans, and I think probably from Nigeria because of my DNA tracing, all of her children were Mulattoes. They all had different fathers. I was able to find the marriage certificates of her three children. Of course there may have been more. The oldest was Cue Connor. The written census spells Quincy with bad penmanship. Therefore, I believe his name was Quincy. He was born around 1843 and according to my research he was married twice. His first wife was Francis Wingate. They were married in 1869 and had four children. Her parents were Issac Brevard and Susan Wingate. Cue Connor's father was listed as Lee Houston and Pegi Graham was listed as his mother. Cue's second wife was Betsy Elizabeth Johnston. Her father was Pinckney Johnston and her mother was Callie Johnston. She was born in 1866 and died of pneumonia in 1919 at the age of 53 years old. Cue died on May 30, 1921. They had 8 children together and lived in Davidson, North Carolina.

My uncles always talked about one of their grandfather's brothers having a son, Sinclair, that went to prison. Their story was, he shot a policeman and never did any time. I recently connected with a cousin, Terri Michelle Connor, Cue's great great granddaughter. She confirmed my uncles' story. The incident occurred at a camp meeting on church grounds, August 3, 1919. The camp meeting was at Morrow Chapel Methodist church. Morrow Chapel Methodist church celebrated their 150 years on August 3, 2022. According to a newspaper article in 1919, Sheriff Lloyd Cloaninger had a warrant to arrest Sinclair Connor for being disorderly while drinking. Sinclair resisted and fired on the officer. Deputy Sheriff Cloaninger returned the fire wounding Sinclair as he ran off. The officer followed a few hundred yards where Sinclair was lying under a tree, suffering from wounds. Sinclair pleaded for the officer not to kill him. This was when Bozzy attacked the officer. It was said that Ralph ran up and shot the Deputy Sheriff twice in the back, one shot proved fatal soon after the officer reached the hospital. Initially, Ralph and Sinclair were found guilty of murder in the first degree. It took the jury only twenty minutes to reach a decision. It was appealed. However, not before Judge W. J. Adams sentenced them to the electric chair before adjournment. They got an appeal three days before they were to be electrocuted. Governor Bickett in 1920 heard the appeal and changed Sinclair's sentence, since Ralph had been sent to the electric chair for actually killing Sheriff Cloaninger. The governor decided since there was no conspiracy, he gave Sinclair 30 years in prison. However, it was reported that Sinclair made a dash for liberty when a guard turned his back. Sinclair was serving a thirty-year prison sentence at Camp Polk farm. Sinclair escaped and was never found. This was reported in the Raleigh News and Observer on April 1, 1921.

Ironically, Cue had other sons that went to serve in the army during World War I. Two of the sons were Bozzy Connor and Ralph Connor. They were only two years apart in age. Bozzy served his time and was

stationed at Camp Meade. He was buried in Mooresville, North Carolina at the Morrow Chapel Methodist church's cemetery. He died in 1954. He spent 20 years in prison after the incident. Ralph was inducted into the service on April 26, 1918 and served overseas from June 10, 1918 to March 6, 1919. His mother passed away on February 13, 1919 of pneumonia. He was released perhaps to attend her funeral. However, he returned to France on February 25, 1919 and was there until March 6, 1919. He was honorably discharged on March 20, 1919. That same year on August 3, 1919 he shot and killed the sheriff. He was a gunman in the army. He was sent to the State Penitentiary in Raleigh, North Carolina and electrocuted on September 20, 1920. He was 21 years and 8 months old.

On October 14, 1920 the *Raleigh News and Observer* printed that the Governor said that, as Ralph Connor was stepping down to death he wrote: "Dear Governor: Just before I go down to die, I will tell you the truth, Sinclair is not guilty of the crime that he is charged with. We did not make no conspiracy at all. After Sinclair was shot down and they were about to kill my brother and then I shot to defend my brothers and so I will ask you not to punish Sinclair for this. And I will die with God in my soul."

(Signed) "Ralph Connor."

The paper also stated that when Ralph was going to the electric chair a baby was crying as Ralph was saying the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and the Lord's prayer.

My uncles were correct about Sinclair shooting a policeman and never doing any time for it. He was seven years older than Ralph.

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## Cooking Guild

Hello from the Cooking Guild.

The members of the Cooking Guild have met at Polk birthplace for over 20 years and have cooked endless receipts from 18th century cookbooks. They are dedicated to authenticity and historical method of cooking and processing food. I have been a member since 2018 and have thoroughly enjoyed working with them. Some of our dear members have experienced life changing events that have prohibited them from meeting regularly. They are in our thoughts and prayers with the hope that they will be able to join us again soon.

### A LOOK BACK!

On March 28, 2019, the Cooking Guild members cooked shad. Shad is a salt water fish that was once plentiful in the Catawba River during the 18th century. They would travel up the river to lay their eggs. Native Americans would set traps to catch them and some traps are still visible in places. Shad generally runs during a small 2-3 week window starting mid- to late-February through mid-March. There has been a decline in the availability of shad in recent years. It is said to be the poor man's fish.



Shad is often planked which is one of the ways we cooked it along with frying and roasting it. The plank we used was oak soaked in water. The shad was cleaned and stuffed with herbs and spices, covered with lemon slices and tied to the board. The board was leaned against the side of the fireplace where it could cook but not so close to burn and rotated to allow for even cooking. It took about 40 minutes to cook. Shad has lots of bones which makes it tricky to eat and not a favorite. We compared the baked with the fried and roasted with most of us agreeing the baked was best. I have planked other fish with great success.

Audrey Mellichamp let us know when the Shad bush bloomed, which is said to bloom when the shad runs.

## FOOD FOR WINTER

For the backcountry folks, this time of year was a hard time to find fresh food to eat, many families relied on root vegetables, dried produce, salted or smoked meat, hunting game or bartering with others. Food supplies were stretched by using bread in soups, stews and as a meal. Cornmeal was more readily available to some so cornbread was often served. Here is a receipt from “The Backcountry Housewife” by Kay Moss, page 12.

### **CORN DODGER**

*One quart of corn meal, a little salt, and water enough to make the batter just stiff enough to make the mixture into cakes, with the hands. Bake in a Dutch oven, on tin sheets.*

*The receipt consists of the basics but by adding some type of sweetener, milk instead of water or an egg, the outcome of this receipt changes the taste and texture.*

### **HOMEMADE CREAM OF CHICKEN SOUP**

*In a saucepan add 1/4 cup butter, melted then stir in 1/4 cup flour and whisk until smooth, Add 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon onion powder and garlic powder, 1/4 teaspoon paprika, salt and paprika.*

*Add 1 1/2 cup chicken broth and 1/2 cup milk, whisking while pouring in liquids to keep mixture smooth. Lower heat and stir until thickens.*

*This receipt is a modern one as you can see by the measurements but I have seen similar receipts in several cookbooks so I took a bit of liberty with it. I made this with turkey broth instead of chicken and added cut up cooked turkey.*

**MHA Dinner Meeting Reservation Coupon: Monday/March 20, 2023**

Trinity Presbyterian Church, (Fellowship Hall), 3115 Providence Rd, Charlotte, NC 28211

Dinner: 6:30 p.m., Program: 7:15 p.m.

**Absolute RSVP deadline: Sunday/March 19th.**

All boxed meals are \$12 each, no discounts for seniors at this time.

Complete this coupon, and make check payable to “**Mecklenburg Historical Association**” (\$12 if one boxed meal, \$24 if two boxed meals). Mail completed coupon and check to: Mecklenburg Historical Association, c/o Barbara Taylor, 308 Braxton Dr., Indian Trail, NC 28079. Contact Barbara Taylor at 336-404-1751 or [btaylor797@aol.com](mailto:btaylor797@aol.com) for any additional questions.

*Boxed meal options (Jason's Deli) include:*

Option 1. **Nutty Mixed-Up Salad (light)** - (430-770 cal) 100% antibiotic-free chicken breast, organic field greens, grapes, feta, cranberry-walnut mix, organic apples, balsamic vinaigrette.

Option 2. **Shelley's Deli Chick** - (650 cal) Family-recipe chicken salad with almonds and pineapple, leafy lettuce, tomato, toasted croissant.

Option 3. **Amy's Turkey-O** - (450 cal) Roasted turkey breast, sliced avocado, jalapeño pepper jack, red onions, tomato, leafy lettuce, stone-ground mustard, toasted onion bun.

Option 4. **Club Royale** - (680 cal) Nitrite-free smoked turkey breast and ham, bacon, Swiss, cheddar, leafy lettuce, tomato, honey mustard, toasted croissant.

Option 5. **Great Southwest Bowl** - (710 cal) 100% antibiotic-free chicken breast, romaine lettuce, rice, pico de gallo, roasted corn and black bean salad and guacamole, cheddar, jalapeño ranch dressing. Southwest spices.

Option 6. **Reuben THE Great** - (610-1170 cal) 1/2 pound of hot corned beef or pastrami, Swiss, sauerkraut, 1000 Island, toasted NEW Marbled Rye.

Option 7. **The Big Chef** - (1030/520 cal) Nitrite-free ham and roasted turkey, Asiago, cheddar, grape tomatoes, kalamata olives, hard-boiled egg, mixed salad greens, ranch.

*Each boxed meal option includes chips and a cookie*

Complete all of the following:

Name(s) for name tags: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if only one boxed meal is being ordered: \_\_\_\_\_ (\$12) Boxed meal option (Check 1 meal option only):

Option 1. \_\_\_\_\_ (Nutty Mixed-Up Salad (light) )      Option 2. \_\_\_\_\_ (Shelley's Deli Chick)

Option 3. \_\_\_\_\_ (Amy's Turkey-O)      Option 4. \_\_\_\_\_ (Club Royale\_

Option 5. \_\_\_\_\_ (Great Southwest Bowl)      Option 6. \_\_\_\_\_ (Reuben THE Great)

Option 7. \_\_\_\_\_ (The Big Chef

Check here if two boxed meals are being ordered: \_\_\_\_\_ (\$24) Boxed meal option (Check up to 2 meal options only):

Option 1. \_\_\_\_\_ Quantity (Enter 1 or 2) \_\_\_\_\_ (Nutty Mixed-Up Salad (light))

Option 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Quantity (Enter 1 or 2) \_\_\_\_\_ (Shelley's Deli Chick)

Option 3. \_\_\_\_\_ Quantity (Enter 1 or 2) \_\_\_\_\_ (Amy's Turkey-O)

Option 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Quantity (Enter 1 or 2) \_\_\_\_\_ (Club Royale)

Option 5. \_\_\_\_\_ Quantity (Enter 1 or 2) \_\_\_\_\_ (Great Southwest Bowl)

Option 6. \_\_\_\_\_ Quantity (Enter 1 or 2) \_\_\_\_\_ (Reuben THE Great)

Option 7. \_\_\_\_\_ Quantity (Enter 1 or 2) \_\_\_\_\_ (The Big Chef)





“Preserving Mecklenburg’s Heritage”

### VISIT US ONLINE

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

## MHA Dues Membership Renewals

Now is the time to renew your MHA membership for 2023. 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 [ttcottingham3@gmail.com](mailto:ttcottingham3@gmail.com) 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. 1<sup>st</sup> – Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>).

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**

### MHA Membership Form:

Check one	Membership Level	Individual	Couple	Contact Information:
	Senior (60+)	\$15	\$25	Name:
	General	\$30	\$50	Address:
	Patron	\$60	\$100	City, State, Zip:
	Life (single payment)	\$300	\$500	Phone:
	Student	Free	n/a	Email:

**Please send my MHA Newsletter by: (One option only.)**

(To help us save time, effort, and expense, while preserving the environment, please choose to download newsletter by a PDF download. You will be notified of publication by email. Select Email for this option.)

Email _____	US Mail _____
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