

Dinner Meeting

Monday, May 18, 2009

6:30 pm. Dinner; program following at 7:15 pm

Fellowship Hall

At Trinity Presbyterian Church

3115 Providence Road



Dinner Program Topic

"A Visit from Thomas and Susannah Polk"

We are fortunate to have a visit from Thomas and Susannah Polk who will be visiting us from 1793 courtesy of the interpretive skills of our own Ann and Jim Williams. Ann as you know is both a Docent and an author. Jim is a master of many trades spanning the centuries. Be it re-enacting or winemaking or brick laying or computer programming, Jim can do it all. He is also the MHA Treasurer! Thomas and Susannah will entertain questions from the audience. If you missed our last meeting, you better not miss this one!

The date is May 18, 1793, and the Polks wish to thank the citizens of Charlotte for proudly remembering that daring declaration made nearly twenty years ago. They will talk of the early days in Mecklenburg when they were among the first

settlers, and the events that led to the document severing all ties to the King. They will discuss the glorious, yet horrendous, war that followed, and how they have fared in the subsequent peace. Feel free to engage them in conversation in the 1793 mode, and when they are done Jim and Ann Williams will magically appear for a more modern discussion.

NEWS FLASH!

On September 28th Mary Kratt will speak about her new book, *Charlotte, North Carolina: A Brief History*.

Review of our last dinner program

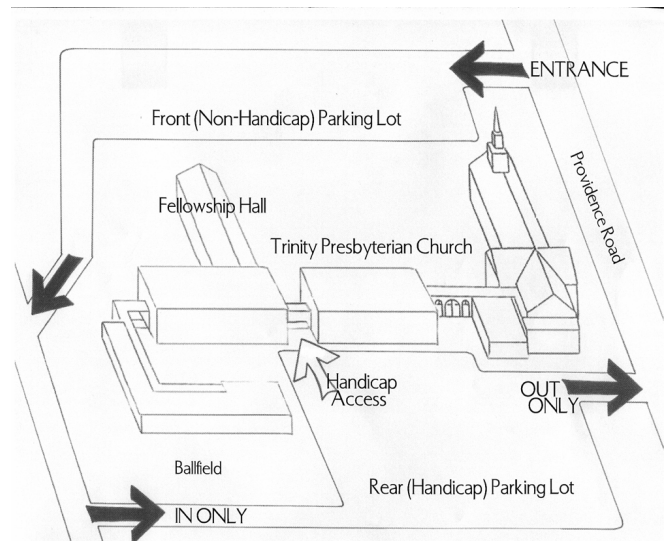
The March program featured a real treat! Nora Brooks, noted living historian portrayed **Mary Anna Morrison** Jackson, the celebrated widow of Stonewall Jackson. She took us back to the 1850s and recounted her courtship and life with the noted General Thomas Jackson. It was enthralling. She vividly described life in the Carolinas in her time with its reliance of New York for party dresses, long treks by rail and steamer to attend the party season in Washington, and her position in the family as the "intelligent one" (not the "pretty one.")
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The MHA meets in Trinity Presbyterian Church's Fellowship Hall.
3115 Providence Road



Remarks from the President...



We have had one of the prettiest spring seasons in decades. The canker worm spraying last year permitted the great hardwood trees, of which Charlotte is so proud to emerge, and

with the help of bountiful rain yield a verdant canopy.

May is here and with it *THE* celebration. The May 20th Society Program will be phenomenal with much support from your Docents and Re-enactors. Here is the announcement:

Noon Observance of the MecDec at Independence Square

Wednesday, May 20th, 2009

Time: 12:00 noon

Location: Independence Square

The corner of Trade & Tryon will serve as the location to this uniquely Charlotte annual celebration. The MecDec celebration has hosted four former Presidents (Taft, Wilson, Eisenhower and Ford), military Generals, a First Lady, and multiple dignitaries. On the site of the declaration of freedom of May 20, 1775, we will celebrate the signing of the declaration, the spirit of our community and the unique and rebellious history that binds our community together.

Events will include, but not limited to: Military and Colonial Re-enactors, Historical Readings, horses, military parades, modern and urban Slam Poetry, and good ol' American-styled patriotic celebration of who we are as a people.

Don't miss out on this **free event** celebrating Charlotte and its people!

Evening Speaker Series, followed by The 2009 MecDec Lecture --Speaker, Doris Kearns Goodwin

Wednesday, May 20th, 2009

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: The McGlohan Theater Atrium

The May 20th Society proudly presents acclaimed historian **Doris Kearns Goodwin**, author of *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. This New York Times bestseller illuminates Lincoln's political genius, his mastery of men and how it shaped the most significant presidency in the nation's history. *Team of Rivals* won the 2006 Lincoln Prize for an outstanding work about the president and/or the Civil War, the inaugural New York Historical Society Book Prize, the Richard Nelson Current award and the New York State Archives History Makers Award. Steven Spielberg is developing a feature film about the book, set to star Liam Neeson as Lincoln and Sally Field as Mary.



Doris Kearns Goodwin won the Pulitzer Prize in history for *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front*

in World War II, which was a bestseller in hardcover and trade paper. She is also the author of the bestsellers *Wait Till Next Year*, *The Fitzgeralds* and *The Kennedys*, and *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*. Ms. Goodwin serves as an NBC-TV news analyst and lectures around the world. Goodwin will speak at The May 20th Society's Fourth Annual Lecture Series event on the evening of May 20th at The McGlohan Theater.

The cost for the lecture is \$35.00

Captain James Jack Bronze

The bronze statue to which we contributed has been commissioned and Chas Fagan is working on it now. It will be unveiled next year in time for all May 20th Celebrations on the Little Sugar Creek Greenway. Captain Jack will be the first statue on the Trail of History. Dr. Tony Zeiss, President of CPCC chairs a very active committee working with County Parks and Recreation, to place figurative statues of the men and women who made our community great along the Greenway stretch from Elizabeth Avenue to Morehead. This venue will become a wonderful teaching tool and location for re-enactments in the years ahead. Your MHA has collaborated with and encouraged all of these efforts!



In May of 2010, The May 20th Society will celebrate the unveiling of the Spirit of Mecklenburg Statue of Captain James Jack at the corner of 4th Street and Kings Drive. A large central fountain between the new Pearl Street Bridge and Morehead Street will be the centerpiece of the greenway with casual seating and an overlook to Little Sugar Creek and a lower creekside plaza. Flanked by trees all around, the fountain, at an estimated 70 feet wide, will be a major attraction. The Little Sugar Creek greenway emphasizes the connectivity needed to serve as alternative transportation to retail and uptown destinations. It also provides passive recreation and activity focal points to engage people throughout the day and into the evening hours.

From the Docent Committee Jo Ann Dickens, Chairperson

May 20 falls on a Wednesday this year. Both Trade and Tryon will be blocked off - not for us, Speed Street starts that day - so we can have lots of room to do our thing including, again this year, The Cannon. What a thrill to see the windows on the bank buildings bulge and hear the car alarms go off. The replica courthouse will again be constructed on the corner. At noon they will block off traffic and we will move to the area in front of the replica courthouse. The cannon will be positioned pointing into Polk Park with the muskets flanking it. We will have the usual political

speeches, the reading of the Meck- Dec, the toasts from 1825, with the Huzzahs!, and the firing of the muskets and the cannon. We will fire the cannon 5 times, just like last year. With the streets blocked off, we will parade to Settlers Cemetery and honor Thomas Polk with wreath, fife tune and volleys Interpreters should arrive at the square at 11:00, or earlier if possible, mingle with the crowd and hand out MeckDec copies while the soldiers play music and march up and down. Parking is available on the streets around the Square - 8 quarters for 2 hours.

The MHA Docents offer a wonderful program and newsletter. Their tours cannot be surpassed. If you want to be included, contact Jim or Ann Williams at the next meeting.

Membership Renewals

If you have not yet renewed your membership for this year, you can use the form below to do so. Or consider giving a gift membership to someone you know who will be interested in the MHA.

You may mail your check to:

MHA
P.O. Box 35032
Charlotte, NC 28235

Membership form:

Name _____
Address _____
City, State and Zip _____
E-Mail Address _____
Please send my MHA Newsletter by:
Email US Mail Both

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

May 18th Dinner Meeting Reservation Form

**Mail to: Mecklenburg Historical Association
c/o Kathy Herran
5015 Sharon Woods Lane
Charlotte, NC 28210
or email: kathyherran@hotmail.com**

Please make checks payable to Mecklenburg Historical Association.
Questions? Please email Kathy Herran (kathyherran@hotmail.com) or call her at 704.553.0936.
Please mail your check one week before the dinner so we know how many meals we need.

Enclosed: \$ _____ (total) for _____ seats (\$12 for Seniors)
\$ _____ (total) for _____ seats (\$14 for all others)

...continued from page 1: A Visit from Thomas and Susannah Polk

She described her courtship after the death of Stonewall's first wife at childbirth, a fast marriage (after all, she was twenty-five!), her wedding journey (to the same places Jackson took his first bride including Niagara Falls), and the peculiarities and adoration of the General.

She also described the hard circumstances under which Jackson grew up. Left to grow up in the home of an uncle who provided food and shelter but little else, Jackson was left on his own. He determined to be a soldier and tried to get an appointment to West Point. Turned down in favor of a boy with more family clout, he saw the boy on the streets shortly after the Academy began its new year and learned he had dropped out. Jackson went to his Congressman, de-

manded and received the appointment, started two months late, and worked very hard to end up with a high rank in his class. His class fought in the Mexican War of 1848 and he achieved distinction on the field of battle. After the war, he obtained a recommendation for a teaching position at VMI from an upper classman who was impressed by his prowess, Robert E. Lee. That recommendation earned him the position and he served successfully as an artillery instructor and less so as a classroom teacher! When the Civil War began, his class at West Point split -- Some to the Union, some to the Confederacy. You know the rest.

Nora is a Union County school teacher who instructs in the honors program in U.S. history with a focus on the Revolution and the Civil War. She has received many honors and awards including the Horace Mann-Lincoln fellowship, Zebulon Vance Award, and Teacher of the Year at Sun Valley High School. Her interpretive performance will be a delight to all as it has audiences in Charleston, Richmond, and Raleigh. If you ever get the chance to watch her performance, you should not miss it. Hats off to Kathy Herran and Jane Johnson, our program chairs!



"Preserving Mecklenburg's Heritage"

Post Office Box 35032
Charlotte, North Carolina 28235

ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB AT
WWW.MECKDEC.ORG
