

MHA NEWS

Dinner Meeting

Monday, May 24, 2010

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

Fellowship Hall

Trinity Presbyterian Church



Upcoming Dinner Program

David Erdman presents "Walking the Streets of Charlotte One Hundred Years Ago"

This program will be presented by well known Charlotte attorney and MHA member, David Erdman, at our May 24 MHA dinner. David, a Duke University graduate and Georgetown University Law School graduate, has a deep love of history. He has assembled over 500 images of Charlotte's Trade and Tryon Streets. Most of these images are between 75 and 125 years old and he has organized these images into a block by block walking tour of Trade and Tryon.



notable former landmarks as Anna Jackson's home and the U. S. Mint before it was moved to the Eastover area. We will have a chance to view the beautiful homes of South Tryon and the mansions of yesteryear on North Tryon. Unfortunately, almost none of these buildings survive today.

Please join us for this distinguished program and enjoy the opportunity to see our city before much of the original landscape was changed.

David Erdman grew up in New Bern, North Carolina, and at ten years old this future historian became entranced by the rebuilding and opening of the beautiful Tryon Palace in his hometown. From then on, David was

hooked on old buildings and their preservation. He attended Duke University on the Angier B. Duke scholarship and was one of the first four graduates in the history of the school to receive a degree in biomedical engineering. He went on to receive his law degree at Georgetown University and made law his career; yet, he still maintains a love of engineering.

He is the head of Erdman, Hockfield, and Leone law firm and is a member and deacon of St. John's Baptist Church. In 1999 he served on the Charlotte City Council and has been recognized as North Carolina's "Legal Elite" in the field of family law. David has lived in Charlotte since 1976; he is married to Lynn Erdman and they have two daughters: Natalie, a recent graduate of Wofford University, and Emily, a student at UNC-Chapel Hill.

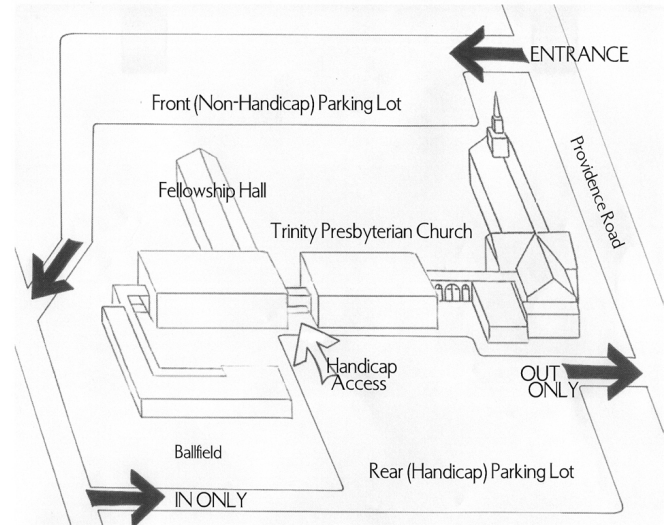
The simulated walking tour will begin at the railroad depot on West Trade and will pass such

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**The MHA meets in Trinity Presbyterian Church's Fellowship Hall.
3115 Providence Road**



Remarks from the President

I had the privilege of attending an event in honor of the Captain Jack bronze sculpture recently, at which Chas Fagan, sculptor, described his work of bringing Captain James Jack and his famous ride to life. First of all, I think it is amazing that, after a worldwide search for the right person to produce this statue, Chas Fagan, a Charlotte resident, received the commission. Mr. Fagan is a renowned sculptor and artist who painted portraits of Mrs. Barbara Bush, President Reagan, and a complete set of the presidents for C-SPAN's 2001 program, American Presidents. In 2008, Mr. Fagan was selected by the California legislature and governor for the creation of the statue for the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Foundation. The bronze statue of President Ronald Reagan was unveiled in the United States Capitol Rotunda on June 3, 2009.

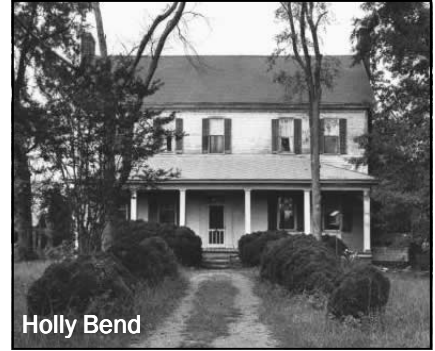
I met Jack Hurley, one of Captain Jack's descendants, who told me a wonderful story about two of his Jack ancestors who eventually migrated to Southern California and became very successful raising thousands of acres of crops there. They found a cheese in Monterey, Mexico, that they liked very much and began to import. They named the cheese and to this day, it is called Monterey Jack.

Mr. Fagan described the lost wax process by which he produced the statue. We saw film of the small clay model that was later produced in one and one-half lifesize scale in 53 pieces. These were cast in bronze at Carolina Foundry in Seagrove, and welded together to form the magnificent statue that is now ours, weighing 3 tons and standing 14 feet tall. Since Captain James Jack was not a young man when asked to carry the Meck Dec to Philadelphia (he was chosen rather than a younger rider to avoid suspicion as he traveled), Mr. Fagan used the face of the man whose horse was used as a model. Mr. Fagan wanted the sculpture to capture the motion of Captain Jack tearing off to Philadelphia, so he had the gentleman with the horse ride in circles past him time after time as he shot photos to use in his work. The

whole process and attention to the smallest detail is fascinating.

The May 20th Society has been primarily responsible for raising the private funds to make this project a reality. Special thanks to Charles Jonas, George Dewey and Scott Syfert for their tireless effort to make this happen. Charles told me at the event that the statue would actually arrive at the site on Friday, April 23. I could not stand it, so I joined the folks waiting in eager anticipation. Captain Jack arrived on a flatbed, was raised into place by a crane, and now sits in what will be a pool of water with lighting and water jets pulsating to give the effect of galloping through a creek. It is truly a breathtaking statue and gave me cold chills to see it put into place. It is now covered by a parachute awaiting the formal unveiling on May 19th and 20th. We've included a photo taken by Jim Williams at the foundry of the statue in progress. Please make an effort to be at the event on May 20th. Details are elsewhere in the newsletter. What an awesome testament to the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence!

MHA has become involved in another project, the plan for the future of the Holly Bend property in Huntersville. Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation has recently acquired Holly Bend, the c.1795-1800 plantation home of Robert (Robin) and Peggy Davidson, and its surrounding 211 acres adjoining Rural Hill on one side and Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge on the other, at a cost of \$6.6 million.



Several members of MHA attended an exploratory meeting with Parks and Rec to give input concerning future plans for Holly Bend. Parks and Rec plans to research all property information and we were able to suggest that some of our members might be interested in performing this work. I'm pleased to report that Robin Brabham, retiring head of Special Collections for Atkins Library at UNC-C and Jim and Ann Williams, noted for their historic research and Ann's historic publications, have agreed to join together on this research project for Mecklenburg County. We look forward to a plan that will safeguard this rare plantation home and inform the public about its history.

If you have not renewed your membership for 2009, please don't forget us. MHA needs your membership support so we can continue to accomplish our overall goal of safeguarding Mecklenburg County's rich history. See you at the dinner on May 24th.

Linda Dalton, President
Mecklenburg Historical Association
704.661.8470 | leaseace@aol.com

The Art of Craft

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 8th, 2010
at Historic Rosedale Plantation, 3427 North Tryon Street

Pottery and Craft sale by some of NC's finest artists

For more information please visit
www.historicrosedale.org or call 704.335.0325
Historic Rosedale Plantation
3427 North Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC 28206

From the Docent Committee

March 20, 2010, was a perfectly magical day! Through the leadership of Sharon Van Kuren and June White, our **WHAT-EVER DID THEY WEAR? FASHION SHOW WAS A "HUGE-MONGOUS"** success. I am so proud of their efforts and those of all the docents, cooking guild, etc., whether it was modeling, ticket sales, decorating (thank you Millie Hodge and Linda Dalton) printing, editing, serving (THANKS to June's buddies) cleaning -- you name it!

All the bills have been paid and we did not lose money. How about that? After all was said, done, and paid, we have a profit of about \$440. There are not enough kudos to say to Sharon Van Kuren for the marvelous job of putting together the actual show. It was so well

done. The food was delicious, the tables lovely, the music perfect.

Comments heard: "What were those little pie things? I could have eaten a whole plate of just those!" "Everything I have ever participated in by the Docents has been first class." - from a gentleman attendee. "This has been wonderful! The show was even better than 9 years ago." - from 2 attendees of 9 years ago. Overheard in the women's rest room: "I wish they had done a segment on flappers..." Next time, dear ones. "This food was really good." - from many people. From the catering company: "All the plates are coming back clean--a good sign indeed." "This tea is heavenly!" from many.

I am so proud of our education committee and its remarkable lecture series, and

our fashion show committee's wonderful job. Notice that I have a "bustin' out" smile. There will be a trip planned for October wherein we will travel to Mt. Vernon for an in-depth tour and hopefully a meal at the mansion. Keep this in mind when making your fall plans. As soon as I have a firm date and price, we will publish the information. Happy spring, everybody!

--Jo Anne Dickens, *Docent Chairman*

The May 20th Society invites you to join us for the 235th Celebration of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, featuring the unveiling of our **"The Spirit of Mecklenburg"** statue by local artist Chas Fagan.

Thursday, May 20, 2010 @ 12pm
 For more information, please visit:
www.May20thSociety.org

Membership Renewals

It is that time of the year again when we fund the modest budget of your organization with dues. Please fill in the form, make your check payable to the Mecklenburg Historical Association, and mail it to P. O. Box 35032, Charlotte, NC 28235. If your employer has a "matching grant" program, or you are retired from such an organization, please include the matching grant form with your check.

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 24, 2010 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)

Upcoming Events

World War II Reenactment,

Saturday, May 15 from 10 am to 4 pm, Latta Plantation. Sunday May 16 from 1 to 4 pm; Main battle at 2 pm each day

Relive World War II as the Allied and Axis forces battle across the plantation grounds! Visit the Allied and Axis camps and learn about uniforms and gear; watch weapon, combat, hospital, patrol, and rations demos; tour the house, visit the animals, and more! Free admission to WWII veterans and \$1.00 off to all other veterans and active duty military. 704.875.2312. www.lattaplantation.org

Living History Day Fundraiser,

Saturday, May 29 from 10 am to 4 pm, Latta Plantation

Tour the plantation house and grounds and see blacksmithing, weaving, open-hearth cooking and farm life. Children can make crafts and dance around the Maypole! Free with regular site admission. 704.875.2312.

www.lattaplantation.org

Beneath the Badge Family Days, Charlotte Museum of History.

Saturdays: May 8, June 12, July 10, and August 14, from Noon to 3 pm each day

Take in the sights and sounds of the CMPD's specialized units during our Family Day program. In conjunction with the Beneath the Badge exhibit, Visitors will interact with the men and women that serve our community. Observe demonstrations by the K9 Unit and view police boats and historical police cruisers. Learn crime prevention techniques and crime scene search tactics. Hands-on activity offerings will be available for museum visitors of all ages. 704.568.1774.

www.charlottemuseum.org

Civil War Encampment,

Saturday, May 8 from Noon to 3 pm, Gaston County Museum

The Confederate History and Monument Preservation Society, portraying Company H of the 23rd NC troops will have a display to view, be on hand to answer questions about the Civil War, and give firing and drilling demonstrations. In honor of

North Carolina Confederate Memorial Day there will be a wreath laying ceremony on the Confederate Marker at 1 pm.

Genealogical Workshop,

Saturday, May 22 from 9:30 am to 4 pm, Lincoln Cultural Center, Lincolnton. Lincoln County Historical Association.

The LCHA and Gaston-Lincoln Genealogical Society are proud to combine efforts and offer this in-depth genealogical workshop, let by Kathy Gunter Sullivan, CG, Robert C. Carpenter and A. Bruce Pruitt, Ph.D.. Registration required by May 15th.

Railways,

Sunday May 23 at 3 pm, Free, Duke Mansion

Walter Turner and Tom Hanchett will talk about the coming of the railroads in the 1850s, how they transformed the piedmont, and led to Charlotte's growth. They will present railroading history from the beginning to the present, and talk about possible future plans. Walter is the historian at the North Carolina Transportation Museum, and Tom is historian at the Levine Museum of the New South.



"Preserving Mecklenburg's Heritage"

Post Office Box 35032
Charlotte, North Carolina 28235
Phone: 704-333-6422

VISIT US ONLINE

WWW.MECKDEC.ORG

Meet Captain James Jack

We all know, or I hope we do, about Captain Jack, “The Paul Revere of the South” who carried the Mecklenburg Declaration of May 20, 1775, by express to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. His journey established Charlotte Town and Mecklenburg County as the first to cast off the yoke of British oppression and declare themselves “A Free and Independent People.” But who was Captain Jack, really?

First of all, he was a tavern keeper. At the time of the Meck Dec he was 45 years old, married with four small children. He and his father owned a popular tavern in Charlotte where citizens often met to discuss current affairs. In those days all men, from 16 to 60, served in the militia. Each Militia Company elected their own officers and James Jack’s neighbors elected him the Captain of their Militia Company.

The Jacks were, like so many early settlers in Mecklenburg County, Scots-Irish. After emigrating from Northern Ireland to Pennsylvania, the Jack family came to North Carolina in 1760. James Jack’s father, Patrick Jack, was such a patriot that when the British General Lord Cornwallis occupied Charlotte in 1780, one of the first things he did was to burn

the Jack tavern and home. Cornwallis said “all of old Jack’s sons were in the rebel army, and he himself had been an active promoter of American independence.” Patrick Jack was, at that time, 80 years old.

Captain James Jack was a patriot. He volunteered to carry the Declaration, and the companion document, the Mecklenburg Resolves, to Philadelphia “by express.” This meant that his only purpose was to deliver these documents and that he would stop along the way to tell others what the patriots in Mecklenburg had done. Even moving as quickly as possible on this journey, it would be over a month before he was back home in Charlotte.

Captain James Jack was a soldier. He served as the Captain of his militia company before, during and after the Revolution, marching out to suppress the Cherokee Indians in 1776 and fighting the British as they invaded North Carolina in 1780 and 1781. As so many true patriots have always done, he gave his own money to support the Revolution and by the end of the war had reduced his fortune considerably. This debt was never repaid.

After the Revolution the Jack family dispersed from North Carolina to Tennessee, Georgia and Texas, among other

places. Descendants of Captain James Jack fought in the Texas War for Independence at the battle of San Jacinto and served the Republic of Texas, and later the State of Texas in a number of roles including a Judge of the Supreme Court, a Secretary of State, and as Representatives and Senators.

Captain James Jack – Scots-Irish Tavern Keeper, Patriot and Soldier – “The Paul Revere of the South.” But the greatest of these was Patriot. Many years later, at the age of 88, living in Georgia, Captain James Jack remembered with great pride the part he had taken in the Revolution and his now-famous ride. - Jim Williams



May 20, 2010 Celebration

This year’s May 20th celebration of the 235th anniversary of the signing of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence will itself be a truly historic occasion, recorded in newspapers and history books and passed down to future generations, for on that day we will unveil and dedicate an heroic bronze statue of Captain James Jack on horseback galloping off to Philadelphia to deliver the Declaration and Resolves to the second Continental Congress.

Credit for this statue goes to many people, but perhaps we should start with the Mecklenburg Historical Association when Marion Redd, in the early 1990s, revived the custom of celebrating May 20th as it had been done in the past. Then Judge Chase Saunders, who had a dream – a series of heroic bronzes portraying Charlotte’s early history, arrayed along a public thoroughfare. With these in place it would no longer be so easy for us to forget our glorious history. As president of the MHA, he spread this dream far and wide. Credit also goes to Dr. Tony Zeiss, President of Central Piedmont Commu-

nity College and his vision for a Trail of History along the Little Sugar Creek Greenway. In 2003 the May 20th Society was formed, dedicated to enhancing the annual Meck Dec Day celebrations. They soon embraced Chase’s idea and began to raise money to build a larger-than-life-size statue of Captain Jack on horseback. And we must thank the sculptor, Chas Fagan, a recent transplant to Charlotte who embraced and supported the project from the beginning and brought it to magnificent fruition. Last, and certainly not least, we owe a debt of gratitude to the members of The History Community – those volunteers, reenactors, MHA members, and others who held the torch aloft, kept the flame burning, and supported in every possible way the leaders who made this project a reality.

The Captain Jack Statue has been fabricated at the Carolina Bronze foundry in Seagrove, NC and transported to Charlotte. It is now in place at the corner of Kings Drive and 4th Street; across Kings Drive from the Overcash building on the CPCC campus, and across 4th Street

from St. Mary’s Chapel. The unveiling and dedication of the statue will actually happen twice. First, on Wednesday evening, May 19, there will be a private celebration, by invitation only, for those who made major contributions to the building of the statue. Volunteers and reenactors dressed in 18th or 19th century clothing are also invited to the event.

The official public unveiling of the statue will occur at noon on Thursday, May 20, at the statue site on the Little Sugar Creek Greenway at the corner of 4th Street and Kings Drive. It will include soldiers marching to the fife and drum, brief political speeches, a reading of the Meck Dec, and the formal unveiling of the statue, accompanied by the crash of musket and cannon fire. An appropriate way to send Captain Jack off to Philadelphia.

Plans are still being firmed up and participants will be informed. If you plan to attend in costume, let us know so that we can keep you informed of the schedule as it develops. Parking is complementary at CPCC’s Employee Theatre Deck on East 4th Street.