

Mecklenburg Historical Association Docents

Promoting Local History through Education and Research



September/October, 2008
Volume 14, Number 4

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- Get out your calendar and mark it with all of the exciting events coming up this fall.
- Docent meetings feature Charles Williams as André Michaux, and Ann Evans on native Americans
- The MHA September meeting features Scott Warren on James K. Polk
- Get your money in for this year's Hart Square Tickets
- The Cooking Guild cooked up a storm at the Foxfire Museum and also with Ivan Day
- A report on our fabulous trip to Fort Defiance
- May was Mecklenburg History Month!
- Site news, events calendar, and more, including free admission at historic sites during Charlotte Shout.

From the Chairman

It seems like yesterday that we were gathered under the Swamp Chestnut Oak tree at Rosedale for our annual picnic. The end of summer was a long way away! However, we are getting ready to start the fall season already! I hope everyone has had a wonderful and restful summer that included some history adventures. Mine included a trip to Ohio where I joined a friend for a visit to the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati. It is a new museum, having opened in 2004. Sitting downtown on the Ohio River and straddling the line that once separated slavery from freedom; its south facing glass façade overlooks the river and is illuminated at night. It is a beautiful building and designed to tell the story so well. The exhibit designers have used modern technology and interesting artifacts to share a painful story in a very positive way. Throughout the museum there is an emphasis on the courage and perseverance that enslaved people and the network of people who helped them escape slavery demonstrated during this period of our history. I highly recommend it to you when you are traveling in that area. The grounds include a nice restaurant and underground parking. For more information visit their web site at www.freedomcenter.org.

On September 2 we will have a wonderful program when Charles Williams takes us back to the 18th century to meet Andre Michaux. Michaux was a botanist, explorer and plant collector who spent time in our area and was, according to Charles Kuralt, "one of the most remarkable human beings of the 18th century or of any century".

On October 7 Ann Evans will talk about the history of the Catawba people during the 16th through the 19th centuries. Ann was the first speaker for our recent history series and extremely popular with all of the class members. Be sure to clear your calendar for those dates and join us.

Alice Bostic

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the November – December issue of the Dandelion will be October 15th. Send articles of interest to the history community to Ann and Jim Williams, 1601 S Wendover Road, Charlotte, NC 28211; or email mhadandelion@mindspring.com. Thanks to all who generously contribute to the Dandelion!

September and October Docent Programs

Both meetings will be held in the Fellowship Hall of Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church. Refreshments: 9:30 am; business meeting: 10 am; program: 11 am. Visitors are always welcome.

Tuesday, September 2, 2008
A Visit from André Michaux

The noted French botanist and explorer will visit with us and tell us about his discoveries and the persons he has recently met including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

Charles Williams will appear, dressed in the latest 18th Century fashion, in the persona of M. Michaux,. This is a program he calls “André Michaux Live” which he has presented over 70 times through the years to raise funds to publish papers regarding M. Michaux. Mr. Williams is a retired librarian and noted Michaux scholar. He has performed research both in the US and in Paris and published a number of monographs on the subject. In 2002 he chaired a Michaux symposium at the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden in Belmont, NC.

Tuesday, October 7, 2008
The Early, Early Days in Mecklenburg

Ann Evans is Archivist and Curator of Collections at the Wm. Elliott White Homestead Archives in Fort Mill, SC. She will speak to us on the historical aspects of Native American life in the back country before the arrival of Europeans. Ann spoke in the first session of our educational class series last year to great acclaim. This is a program you will really enjoy.

MHA Dinner Meeting

The next MHA dinner meeting will be Monday, September 29th at Trinity Presbyterian Church. Dinner is at 6:30 followed by the program at 7:15. Those not having dinner are welcome to enjoy the program at no charge. To make dinner reservations contact Kathy Herran at 704-553-0936 or kathyherran@hotmail.com.

Scott Warren, manager of the President James K. Polk State Historic Site, will present an illustrated lecture on President and Mrs. Polk. Considered by some historians to be among the greatest of American Presidents, James K. Polk is a fascinating character. He promised to serve only one term and kept that promise. In that one term he fought and won the Mexican War, added California and Arizona to the Union and paid off the national debt, all while operating with an executive Department of himself and one secretary. Born in Mecklenburg County, he moved as a child to Tennessee where he spent the rest of his life. Come hear an expert tell all about President Polk and his accomplishments.

Decent Book Club

The book club will meet after the September meeting to discuss *A Magnificent Catastrophe* by Edward J. Larson. It is the story of the 1800 presidential election campaigns of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. It was a bitter and contentious campaign, and from it emerged our two party system of elections. Larson’s opening sentence, “They could write like angels and scheme like devils” sets the scene which makes modern day politics seem downright gentlemanly. Feel free to join the discussion whether you’ve read the book or not. Bring a sandwich if you’d like. We’ve not yet selected a book for October. If you have a suggestion, or want to be informed when a book has been chosen, contact Rachel Abernathy.

Hart Square Tickets

For more than thirty years, Dr. Robert Hart of Hickory has rescued and restored Carolina life of the nineteenth century, recreating an entire village, Hart Square—the largest collection of original historic log buildings in the United States.

Each year on the fourth Saturday in October, (October 25th this year), Dr. and Mrs. Hart open this restoration project to the public. Dating from 1782 to 1873, the seventy log structures—chapels, barns, houses, shops, and more—are all furnished, and around 220 volunteer artisans demonstrate the period techniques of flax breaking and hackling, spinning, weaving, herb dying, open-hearth cooking, broom and shoe making, shingle riving, wheelwrighting, tinsmithing, and moonshining.

To get tickets (\$25.00 each) call the Catawba County Museum of History in Newton on October 1 at 9:00 am. Keep dialing back until you get through. The tickets will all be gone that day or the next. As participants, we can order tickets for you in advance. Make your check out to Jim Williams for \$25.00 per ticket and mail it and a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

Jim and Ann Williams
1601 South Wendover Road
Charlotte, NC 28211

We must receive your check by September 10 to get these tickets. We will receive the tickets by mid-October and mail them on to you.

Historical Cooking Guild of the Catawba Valley

The cooking guild visited the Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center in Mountain City, Ga. May 16th through 18th. Foxfire began in 1966 with high school students who interviewed area mountain residents for a magazine, one still published today. These interviews spawned eleven Foxfire books recording the lives, frontier skills, culture, and history of the Southern Appalachian Mountains. Over 8.2 million copies have been sold.

Many of the guild's cooks, having read the Foxfire books, were excited to have the opportunity to cook in one of their historic log buildings. The site, located on the side of Black Rock Mountain, includes a visitors center and library, a reconstructed village of twenty log buildings, and nature trails. It serves as a national training center for teachers.

The cooking guild prepared seasonal foods and demonstrated open hearth cooking in the 1820 Savannah House. The cooks were Barbara Goodwin, Carolyn Dilda, Pam Dudeck, Mary McGinn, and Leila Merims. Assisting were Reggie Goodwin and Bill McGinn. Visitors shared their memories of how their families prepared foods years ago including sulfured apples and hominy.

And "Foxfire"? It's a blue-green phosphorescence seen on the mountains in the summer.

The Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center is on Rt. 441, 3.2 miles north of Clayton, Ga. Their address is P.O. Box 541, Mountain City, Ga. 30562. Phone: 706-745-5828. www.foxfire.org. Barbara Goodwin

The Cooking Guild's September Schedule: The 11th and 25th are their regular open hearth sessions at the Polk historic site, and on the 13th they will participate in the site's Mexican War reenactment. On the 27th they will be at the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh for the museum's colonial and early American festival. September 18th is the guild's 11th anniversary. Congratulations ladies!

Cooking with Ivan Day

In September 2007 Carolyn Dilda, one of the most adventuresome Cooking Guild members, traveled to England to take a Georgian cooking class with renowned culinary historian Ivan Day. Based on her positive experience and knowing that Mr. Day would be speaking at a conference at Harvard in April this year, we invited him to detour to

Charlotte to teach a one-day cooking workshop. He agreed and on Monday, April 14th, we convened at 9:30 AM in the James K. Polk kitchen and settled in to listen as Ivan Day described how escaping a rainstorm led to his holing up in an antiquarian bookshop, randomly picking up a period cookbook, buying it, and setting off down the path to international recognition for both his research and his expertise as a cook.



Ivan, as he insisted we call him, brought with him a suitcase filled with interesting cooking tools and ingredients. One of the most special artifacts he brought to share was a 1670 unpublished manuscript, a cookbook handwritten by the Duchess of Norfolk, Lady Arandelle. Ivan allowed us to hold it and read it. The handwriting was remarkable for its legibility, although it did alter as the writer aged. Some of the recipes seemed familiar; others were quite unique. Turning the pages of this book created by another woman 330+ years ago was deeply moving.

As Ivan outlined the cooking we would accomplish that day, he named and described the uses of the special accoutrements we would use. They included a Staffordshire salt-glazed stoneware fish mold (circa

1750) we would fill with flummery (blanc mange) and then gild, using the gold tissue he brought for the purpose. Blanc mange is a mild, sweet pudding made with milk, sugar, almond flavoring from apricot kernels, and rosewater; its setting is facilitated with the addition of powdered isinglass, taken from the swim bladder of the sturgeon. He detailed the successful use of isinglass, something we had never previously mastered.

Ivan led us through the process of making “marchpane” or marzipan (two parts skinless, ground almonds to one part sugar), mixing it with ground cinnamon and ginger for coloring, and pressing it into molds carved to create halves of walnut shells. The halves were then joined to create whole “walnuts.” In the 18th century, the shells might have been filled with mottoes or sayings.

As well, we made Shrewsbury Cake (8 oz. butter, 4 oz. sugar, and 12 oz. plain flour) and used more of Ivan’s wooden molds to make decorative 3 inch round discs of the shortbread.

Ivan also brought a mold to hold the raised savory pie we would create and bake for three hours. This was the most elaborate and challenging recipe of the day. We created the bottom, sides, and top of the pie from an especially sturdy dough and filled the interior of the “coffin” with layers of chicken breasts and pork forcemeat, all seasoned with herbs, salt, and pepper. We decorated the “lid,” carefully placing dough-leaves we molded with another of Ivan’s special tools, designed just for the purpose. Yet another mold allowed us to create a fancy dough roping to decorate the lid’s perimeter.

The pie, flummery, shortbread, and walnuts were all to be displayed the next evening at the Charlotte Museum of History, when Ivan Day would speak on the subject of “Traditional Food is New Again: Eating Like Our Ancestors.”

Altogether, the day we spent with Ivan Day was wonderful! He treated us as serious fellow cooks, kept us on task to accomplish the completion of many dishes, but did so with great warmth and good humor. He shared with us many techniques and subtleties that are distinctly missing from early cookbooks. We hope he will visit again soon and teach us more about thinking like 18th century cooks.

Wanda Hubicki

Docents and Friends Travel to Fort Defiance

It was a beautiful spring day, May 6th to be exact, when a group of 30 plus docents, some spouses and friends, boarded a bus for a long awaited trip to Fort Defiance. Little did we know what a treat awaited us as we enjoyed a pleasant trip through the sunny vistas along the way to the unique home of General William Lenoir in Caldwell County, just outside of the town of Lenoir.

General Lenoir was a man of great achievement, whose life reflected his desire early in life to persevere, despite setbacks along the way. The youngest of ten children, his father died when he was 14 in 1765, and he was left to help support his family. His education interrupted by this event, he continued his studies in his spare time and in 1769 he opened an elementary school in Brunswick County, Va. and another in Halifax County NC in 1770. After his marriage to Ann Ballard and the birth of their first child in 1771, he felt he needed more than a teacher's salary to support his growing family. He chose the profession of land surveying and moved his family to western North Carolina from Halifax in 1775, settling near present day Wilksborough.

He was active in the repelling the incursions of the Cherokee Indians on the frontier settlements and was also an early member of the Committee of Safety for Surry County. During the battle of King's Mountain he was wounded in the side and arm. He also fought in the battle on Haw River and in other minor battles during the Revolutionary War in the backcountry.

His service to his county and state following the war are too numerous to mention, but one of the most noteworthy was his service in the state senate for many years, the last seven of which he was the speaker of that body. A noteworthy accomplishment in his eighty-eighth year was cited in the *Biographical History Of North Carolina* in 1905: "To him was accorded not merely length of days, but almost uninterrupted health, and it is narrated that at the age of eighty-eight years he rode on horseback fifty miles to attend the superior Court of Ashe County, crossing the Blue Ridge, and also attended the court of his own county, a distance of twenty-four miles from his residence."

General William Lenoir died on May 6, 1839. In fourteen more days he would have had his 89th birthday. He is buried in the family cemetery on the grounds of his home, Fort Defiance.

During his years as a surveyor, Lenoir had the opportunity to become acquainted with the beautiful area now called "Happy Valley" in what was then Surry County, now Caldwell County. On a lovely spot he built his home which he called Fort Defiance in commemoration of an early fort that had been nearby, built to ward off Native American raids on European settlers. This home remains, having been in the family since it was completed in 1792, until it was turned over to a foundation for its maintenance and upkeep.

Our group was treated to a very educational and interesting tour, lead by Becky Phillips, the Executive Director who had assistance from a direct descendant of General Lenoir, Ike Forester, who is the president of the foundation. The house has been altered little since it was built, except for an addition which was done early in its life. The contents are unique, in that many are original to the house and family, and they number over 300. Included are farm implements, furniture, utensils, pottery and china, textiles, family portraits and paintings, books and personal items belonging to Lenoir and his family.

Not only is the house a treasure, but the grounds are also. There is a 200 year old boxwood garden, a 200 year old hybrid Chestnut tree and North Carolina's oldest Beech tree, among many other interesting plantings.

Following our tour, we enjoyed a delicious pre-ordered lunch in the pavilion on site and boarded the bus for Charlotte in the afterglow of a day doing what history lovers do best – revisiting the places and times of those who established a life style that reflected their values and hard work in a manner that is both admirable and amazing. General William Lenoir, his wife and their nine children, left behind a historic site that fills the bill in every way.

To learn more about Fort Defiance and its hours of operation, visit their web site at www.fortdefiance.org or phone them at 828/785-1671.

Lisa Tappy

Journey of a Lifetime

The Elderhostel catalog always contains great temptations but, when they listed a program called Journey of a Lifetime they had my attention. The trip description listed destinations of Israel, Jordan and Egypt, all places I wanted to see. I quickly signed up but, as I told my family and friends where I planned to travel, there were frowns and cautionary comments regarding the safety of travel in that part of the world. I listened but, my heart said go. Life is short and if you wait until that part of the world is calmer you may never go.

What an adventure it turned out to be! After arriving in Tel Aviv we traveled to Jerusalem and checked in to our hotel. The next morning found us looking at the Old City of Jerusalem from the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives. From then on we were immersed in the most intense historical experience I ever expect to have. It defied description. From the Western Wall to the Dome of the Rock to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher we were looking at the structures that have defined religious history for centuries. Jerusalem is a place where people from all over the world come. The mix of dress and language feels like the UN. The city seemed very peaceful and tourism was thriving. After two days we went to Caesarea and Akko, historic places from the time of the Romans and the crusader period on the Mediterranean coast. Our stay in Israel ended with visits to the sites where Jesus spent most of his life near the Sea of Galilee. From there we went to Jordan where we spent a day at the Dead Sea and a day exploring Petra, one of the world's most impressive archeological sites. The next stop was Cairo and after visiting the pyramids and other historic sites we enjoyed a Nile cruise and visits to numerous temples and tombs of the pharaohs. Our last day was spent in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

One of the exciting aspects of traveling in this part of the world is seeing the efforts being made to find more sites from ancient history. Modern archeological methods are providing glimpses into the lives of ancient people that would not have been possible until recently. I know you may still be thinking such a trip is ill advised. I am glad I went and hope you too will consider such an experience. Life is short!

Alice Bostic

May is Becoming Mecklenburg History Month!

This year our celebration of May 20 continued the expansion of the last several years and is now extending through the entire month of May.

Saturday, May 3, Latta Plantation held their annual Bluegrass and Barbeque fund raiser. The music was good as was the barbeque and the company. Latta made a great success of it and raised significant funds towards continuing their excellent programs.

Tuesday, May 6, the MHA Docents visited Fort Defiance in Happy Valley – see above.

Saturday, May 10, “The Art of Craft” at Historic Rosedale. See the Rosedale section, below

Saturday and Sunday, May 17-18 saw the reenactment of Revolutionary War battles at Rural Hill. The action was intense with cannon, horses, fife and drum, and lots of gunfire. Spectators got a real sense of what life was like during the “late unpleasantness.”

Saturday evening, May 17 was the first occasion of what we all hope will become an annual event. The Charlotte Museum of History and Hezikiah Alexander Homesite hosted all of the areas historic sites and organizations at the

Homesite celebrating the Declaration. We all had a chance to talk to the public about our sites and activities, ate excellent barbeque and listened to a reading of the Declaration and speeches. Let's do it again next year!

On **Tuesday, May 20**, we held the usual festivities at the Square at Noon. Reenactors and costumed docents were there in sizable numbers, we Huzzah'd the reading of the Meck Dec, fired muskets and a cannon and paraded down the street to Settlers Cemetery to show our respect for our founding fathers. The cannon was especially effective this year as the cannon crew fired it directly into Polk Park and the reverberations echoed in the canyon and shook the tall buildings. And we got some excellent publicity in The Charlotte Observer, after the fact.

Tuesday evening we were treated to a talk by noted Documentary maker Ken Burns. Those of us in 18th Century dress got to meet Mr. Burns up close and personal at a reception before the event at Spirit Square.

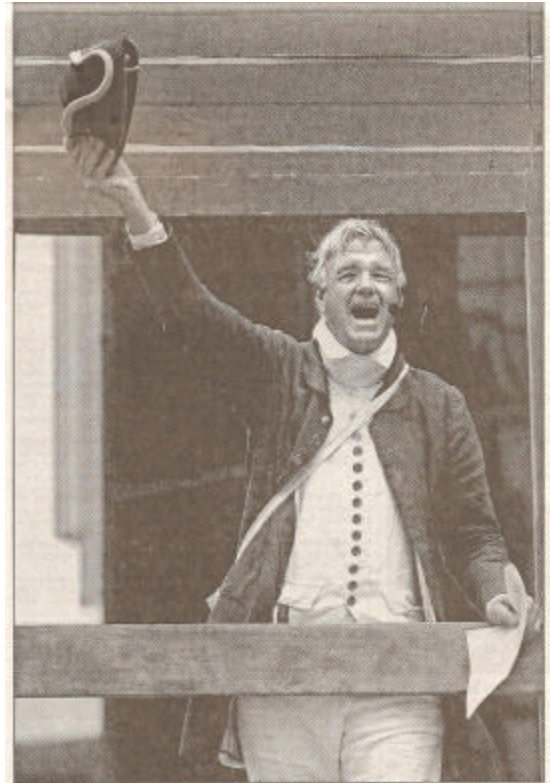
On **Saturday, May 24** there was a Civil War medical demonstration at Historic Rosedale. See the Rosedale section, below.

Finally, on **June 5** the May 20 Society held a fundraising event at the Eastover home of Claudia Belk. This was for the Captain Jack Statue which will be built in the Little Sugar Creek Greenway across from CPCC. It will be the first of many statues and plaques that will make up the Charlotte Trail of History in the Greenway. The artist selected for the project is Chas Fagan, who moved to Charlotte a few years ago. Mr. Fagan displayed and discussed a model of the statue which features Captain James Jack on horseback splashing through a stream on the way to Philadelphia to deliver the Mecklenburg Declaration to the Continental Congress.

As usual, highlighting the event were the MHA Docents and reenactors in 18th Century dress. We were visited by a delegation from Mecklenburg, Germany (not from Mecklenburg Strelitz, the home of Queen Charlotte, but from Mecklenburg-West Pomerania). The fife and drum of the 6th NC reenactors welcomed the delegation and the drummer, Tom Phlegar, welcomed them in fluent German! This pleased and gratified the visitors and led to an on-camera interview which was to be broadcast later in Germany. After barbeque and speeches, the delegation passed the hat and contributed a few Euros to the Captain Jack Statue.

On **July 3rd**, as a footnote to all of this, George Will wrote in his national syndicated column that without question Mecklenburg was the first to declare Independence from Great Britain!

Jim Williams



In the spirit of Colonel Thomas Polk, a re-enactor finishes the reading of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence with a toast at Tuesday's Meck Dec Celebration.

Hear ye, hear ye!

Charlotteans gathered at Trade and Tryon on the site of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of May 20, 1775, for the annual Meck Dec celebration. With military and Colonial re-enactors, historical readings, military parades and urban slam poetry, attendees celebrated the signing of the Mecklenburg Declaration and the rebellious history the county shares.

Summer Events at Rosedale

The Art of Craft

Once again, Historic Rosedale Plantation had a very successful *Art of Craft* event, attracting participants and visitors from all over the Carolinas and beyond! Now in its third year, this event brings together the best potters

and other artists and craftspeople of the Carolina Piedmont and raises significant funds for the support of Historic Rosedale Plantation. This year's festivities were augmented with a Colonial Village featuring craftsmen such as a Joiner, Blacksmith, Surveyor, Bookbinder and many others, all dressed in the finest 18th Century fashion. Many kudos were given to the volunteers by the visitors.

Rosedale staff and Board wishes to thank these volunteers whose time and energy was vital to this event and helped make it such a success:

Millie Hodge and her granddaughters, Breanna and DeeDee Hodge

Hazel White	Lisa Tappy	Jim and Ann Williams	Jim Daniel
Jim and Linda Ray	Ralph Shore	Dale Loberger	January Porter
Carolyn Dilda	Janet Dyer	Dick and Sharon VanKuren	Jim and Rachelle Williams

Thanks, again, everyone. Your participation is important to us and very much appreciated.

Civil War Hospital

On Saturday, May 24 Historic Rosedale presented a Civil War medical demonstration featuring The Living History Association of Mecklenburg, also known as the 13th North Carolina Field Hospital. Although it rained off and on all day, attendance was good for the first of what will become an annual event. This is especially appropriate event not only because the master of Rosedale in the antebellum period was Dr. David Caldwell, but also because a military hospital was set up in Charlotte in the spring of 1865 and housed 1,300 wounded and sick Confederate soldiers as the war ended.

News from Latta Plantation

Karen Thompson became Latta's new Director of Special Events, Marketing, and Volunteers in July. When Karen was a college student, she visited Latta and fell in love with the site. That was eleven years ago. Since then she has volunteered at Latta off and on as time permitted. She is a civil war reenactor, and has a love of history which she enjoys sharing with others. About two years ago she joined the staff to develop educational programs and tend to bookkeeping chores. Her goal in her new position is to find creative ways to get new volunteers and keep them involved. If you would like to be one of those volunteers give Karen a call.



Rachel Hooey will be at Latta until the end of September. We've enjoyed working with you, Rachel, and we'll miss you. Congratulations, Karen; we're looking forward to getting to know you.

"Heart and Soul" at Brattonsville

Kitty Wilson Evans has for many years been portraying Kessie, an historically documented Bratton plantation slave. With emotion and authenticity she brings Kessie and plantation slave experience to life. In 2007 Kaye Cloniger was inspired to write a poem and paint a series of fourteen portraits that "capture the essence and spirit of Kessie". These paintings are now on display in the visitor orientation room at Historic Brattonsville. The exhibit will run through December.

New Position at the James K. Polk Historic Site

Polk has an opening for a new part time position. The job is for 30 hours per week on Saturdays and some weekday afternoons. Duties include some maintenance of the museum and historic buildings, giving tours, helping with public programs, and working with the staff to develop new programs and exhibits. If you are interested, or know a student interested in paid museum experience, contact Courtney Hybarger at 704-889-7145.

Events at Westmore Pottery

Westmore Pottery in Seagrove, NC specializes in reproductions of redware pottery used in our area in the 18th and 19th centuries. They supply regional reenactors and historic sites with much of their fine earthenware and common "dirt dishes". On Saturday, Sept. 20, from 9 am to 5 pm they are sponsoring a Revolutionary War era living history day. At 2 pm Jim Daniel will portray an 18th century surveyor. Jim has given this presentation at Williamsburg and Mount Vernon, and has written a book on the topic. After his performance he will sell and sign books. All reenactors in period clothing of any part of the time period from 1600 – 1850 will receive a discount at the pottery.

On Saturday Oct. 18, from 9 am to 5 pm cooks from the Schiele Museum will demonstrate hearth cooking in Westmore's enormous fireplace. A variety of foods will be prepared throughout the day, and samples will be offered. From 1 to 3 pm Kay Moss and Kathryn Hoffman will be signing copies of *The Backcountry Housewife*. Discounts on historical cookbooks will be available all day.

Charlotte Folk Society Returns Music to the Great Aunt Stella Center

Charlotte Folk Society has moved its monthly Gatherings to a new location, the Great Aunt Stella Center. After twenty-six years, Folk Society concert attendance simply outgrew its Central Piedmont Community College venue.

The building now known as the Great Aunt Stella Center was built in 1914 as a home for the Tabernacle ARP Church. Designed by James M. McMichael, the architect of the two churches now known as Spirit Square and the Afro- American Cultural Center, it possesses the same grace and warmth. Men, women, and children gathered, prayed, celebrated, and mourned in the neoclassical church for nearly 70 years. In the late 1980s, Tabernacle ARP was faced with declining membership and a dramatically changing neighborhood. After much prayer and thought, the congregation opted to keep the church alive by moving to the suburbs.

In 1997 the property was purchased by local businessman and philanthropist Bruce Parker. He christened it the Great Aunt Stella Center, after a beloved great aunt, Stella Vandalia Sparrow, who was a home missionary and advocate for the poor. Fitted with state-of-the-art sound and lighting systems, it became a prime setting for concerts, lectures, debates, and conferences. In 2002, Self-Help, an affiliate of one of the nation's leading community development financial institutions, purchased the property. The Center has continued to serve as a site for meetings and weddings, but musical performances have been absent for several years.

Charlotte Folk Society brought music back to Great Aunt Stella on August 8th with the opening of its 2008-2009 Gathering Concert Series. The former church sanctuary offers a beautiful performance space with its curving designs, handsome dark wooden pews, and brilliant Italian stained glass windows. Designed to accommodate 400, the room's intimacy and spirituality delight the soul.

Wanda Hubicki

A Little Summer Reading

Uncle Tom's Cabin and *Gone With the Wind* have been on my "to read" list for years. This summer they became my project. I had never read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe. I don't remember ever being encouraged to do so, and doubt it was required or even suggested in many southern school rooms. Although I have seen the film many times, I'd read *Gone With the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell only once, over forty years ago when I knew next to nothing about history. So I decided to read them both in one fell swoop; it was a wonderful juxtaposition.

Uncle Tom's Cabin, published in 1852, was a delightful surprise. I had expected an abolitionist lecture demonizing all southerners. Instead Stowe presented a balanced and accurate view of the complicated and multifaceted institution of slavery. The story opens with Mr. Shelby deeply disturbed by a slave trader demanding two of his people, Eliza's small son and Tom. Mrs. Shelby is adamant that they not be sold. She can't abide breaking apart families, and fears that if sold they will be horribly mistreated. The Shelbys work their slaves reasonably, show them true affection, and treat them gently. The slave trader has a financial hold over Mr. Shelby, and the deal can't be avoided. Eliza and her child make a dramatic escape, and with the help of Quakers complete a perilous journey to Canada. (Eliza crossed the river from Kentucky to Ohio at Cincinnati. Reading Alice's account of the museum there in "From the Chairman" gave me quite a chill.)

The trader gets only Tom and sells him to Mr. St. Clare in New Orleans. St. Clare, an idle gentleman of means, gives Tom only one job: to be a companion to his charming and precocious daughter, little Eva. St. Clare dies while in the process of arranging Tom's freedom. His widow, a selfish mean-spirited woman who hates Negroes (and nearly everyone else), insists that Tom be sold. So Tom becomes the property of Simon Legree, whose plantation is truly a chamber of horrors. Reluctantly Tom labors as commanded, endures brutal abuse, and spends rare free moments reading his Bible to his fellows; surprisingly many of Stowe's slave characters are literate. Tom stoically protects other slaves, and while abetting the escape of several of them earns his demise. He was strong, principled, and good; definitely not an "Uncle Tom."

Stowe strongly admonishes cruel slave owners, and maintains that broken families and lack of autonomy are unbearable, even to those treated well. She delivers almost as much venom to Northerners who plied the slave trade in their vessels and profited from hungry mills fed by southern cotton. It was her view, antiquated today, that abolitionists had a responsibility to educate Negroes, teach them trades and self governance, then settle them peacefully in Africa. There are far too many characters and plot twists to mention here; they all ring true due to Stowe's vast abolitionist experience.

Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* is much grander than the film. It contains more characters and plot lines, and many informative details about war strategy and reconstruction politics. Otherwise the film is faithful to the book. Much of its dialogue was lifted straight from Mitchell's pen. Scarlett, Rhett, Ashley, and Melly are unchanged. The slave characters are more fully formed in the book. They have strengths and flaws common to all people. Yet they are depicted as happy and content with their lot. The story is told almost entirely from Scarlett's point of view; she could not have seen them any other way. Was this also Mitchell's belief? It's hard to tell. But given the time when the novel was written, in the mid 1930s, it would be folly to expect a more enlightened rendering. I did come away with the same reaction I had all those years ago: the war was terrible, but reconstruction was worse, shamefully so. That may be why Southerners can't let go of the war and put it to rest. Mitchell maintained that reconstruction was as bad for the Negroes as it was for the whites, and I think she had that part right.

Ann Williams

The History Calendar

Admission charged at all event unless otherwise noted.

Charlotte Shout

On Saturday, September 6, the Arts and Science Council will sponsor a “Cultural Free for All”. Many cultural venues, including some historic sites, will be open to the public at no admission charge. At press time, we know that The Charlotte History Museum, Historic Rosedale, The Levine Museum of the New South and The Charlotte Trolley Museum will be free. Check the newspaper during the first week in September for details and we will send out email updates as we learn more .

The Charlotte Museum of History

3500 Shamrock Drive, Charlotte, NC, 704 568 1774, <http://www.charlottemuseum.org>

Revolutionary Charlotte, Saturday, September 20, 11 am – 4 pm

This event celebrates the history of the American Revolution in Charlotte. Visitors will learn about what happened in the Queen City during the war, visit encampments of both American and British troops, and learn about the Native American tribes that also called the Carolinas home.

Haunted Homesite, Friday, October 24, 6 pm – 9 pm

Encounter ghosts and ghouls and “Devil Charlie” Polk during guided outdoor tours of the historic grounds at the Hezekiah Alexander Homesite. Inside the Museum, enjoy ghost stories, games, and craft-making activities. Families with younger children are encouraged to come earlier in the evening for ghost stories appropriate for little ones. Come in costume and compete for prizes! Reservations required.

Historic Rosedale

3427 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC, 704 335 0325, <http://www.historicrosedale.org>

Metalworking in Antebellum Mecklenburg Saturday, September 27, 11:30 am – 1 pm

A panel from Central Piedmont Community College will lead a discussion of metalworking, and social and economic development.

Rosedale Midnight Tour, Saturday, October 25, 11:30 pm – 12:30 am

Join staff and volunteers who have had supernatural “experiences” in the house. Space limited to six. Must pre-register with payment by Oct. 28th. \$100 per person. No refunds.

Rosedale Grounds Spirit Walk, Halloween, Friday, October 31, 7 – 8 pm

Listen to documented tales from staff, visitors and volunteers of Rosedale’s past of a “different” sort.

Latta Plantation

5225 Sample Road, Huntersville, NC, 704 875 2312, <http://www.lattaplantation.org>

Revolutionary War Reenactment, Saturday Sept. 6, 10 am-4 pm, and Sunday Sept. 7, 11 am-4 pm. On Saturday, reenactors will fight the Battle of Charlotte, which originally occurred at the corner of Trade and Tryon Streets. Sunday will feature the Battle of McIntyre Farm, which took place a few miles from Latta, off Beatties Ford Road. **Battle will be at 1 pm each day.** View military camps, enjoy numerous demonstrations, and take in a hot meal from the food vendor.

26th Annual Folklife Festival and Craft Show, Saturday and Sunday, October 11-12, 10 am-4 pm.

Interpreters will demonstrate the folkways of the past throughout the plantation. Demonstrations include open-hearth cooking, blacksmithing, gunsmithing, woodworking, spinning, dyeing, weaving, and modern craft vendors. Enjoy live music and eat a hot lunch from the food vendor!

Ghost Tales in the Dark, Friday and Saturday, October 17-18, at 8:00 pm.

Walk the house and grounds by lantern light. Your guide will share real experiences by staff members and volunteers, ghost hunters, and more.

Ghostwalk, Friday and Saturday, October 24 and 25, 7-10 pm

Come for a historic Ghost Walk through the grounds. You'll walk over grounds still visited by the undead & through grisly scenes. Not recommended for small children.

Fort Defiance

On highway 268, 5.5 miles northeast of HWY 321, near Lenoir, NC, 828 758 1671.

www.fortdefiancenc.org

Living History Days, Saturday and Sunday, September 20-21, 10 am-5 pm

Meet General and Mrs. William Lenoir and tour their 1792 house. The grounds will be peopled with craftsmen, backwoodsmen., and a team of oxen.

Schiele Museum

1500 E. Garrison Blvd., Gastonia, N.C. 704 866 6900 <https://www.schielemuseum.org>

Schiele Museum

The Swamp Fox Remembers, Thursday, September 25, 7 pm

Presenting a one-time-only performance of *The Swamp Fox Remembers* with Dr. Joseph Taylor Stukes as General Francis Marion recounting his trials and tribulations in service during the American Revolution. Light refreshments of the 18th century following the performance.

Indian and Pioneer Heritage Day, Sunday, Sept. 28, 1 – 5 pm

Learn about the Catawba Indians and German and Scots-Irish settlers in the 18th century piedmont from costumed interpreters. Enjoy demonstrations, displays, and tours of the Catawba Indian Village and the Backcountry Farm.

Scottish Heritage Day, Oct. 26, 1 – 5 pm

Celebrate our Scottish and Scots-Irish heritage through history, music, dress, and customs of Highland and Lowland Scots. Theme for the day is "Scots in the American Revolution." Visitors may watch interpreters prepare dishes of early Scots settlers, and learn about the Highland cow, a rare breed with short legs and a very shaggy coat.

President James K. Polk State Historic Site

12031 Lancaster Hwy., Pineville, NC, 704 889 7145

<http://www.nchistoricsites.org/polk>

Mexican War Muster Day Saturday, September 13, 9 am – 5 pm

Neighbors in conflict. This living history program will give visitors a chance to look into the life of a common citizen called into service due to the 1846 conflict with Mexico. Living History re-enactors will be drilling, practicing domestic lifestyles, and speaking with visitors about life in Mecklenburg County in 1846. Free admission.

Catawba Valley Cooking Guild Thursdays, Sept. 11 and 25, 10 am – 2 pm

Open Hearth cooking demonstrations the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. Free admission.

Rural Hill

4431 Neck Road, Huntersville, NC, 704 875 3113, <http://www.ruralhillfarm.org>

The Amazing Maize Maze at Rural Hill is open from September 11 through November 2, Thursday through Sunday each week. Daily operations start at 10 am with the last ticket each day sold at 5 pm. You can also go through the Maze by flashlight on Fridays, September 19 at 8 pm and October 10th and 31st at 7 pm. The design of this year's Maze is based on the US Constitution.

Historic Brattonsville

1444 Brattonsville Rd., McConnells, SC, 803 684 2327

<http://www.chmuseums.org/ourmuseums/myco/index.htm>

By the Sweat of Our Brows, Saturday, September 13, 10 am-3 pm.

Learn about the lives of Africans from their homeland to the site of Historic Brattonsville and beyond through powerful theatrical presentations, storytelling, song, and hands-on activities. Refreshments available for purchase.

Piedmont Pottery Festival, Saturday, September 27, 10 am-4 pm.

Celebrate the South's rich pottery heritage including demonstrations by some of the best traditional potters from the Carolinas and Georgia, pottery sales and talks by noted pottery historians. Local barbecue will be for sale.

Black Hope, White Fear, the attempted slave revolt of 1860, Saturday, October 4, 10 am-3 pm.

In conjunction with Old Salem's "Nat Turner Slave Revolt" event on Sept. 27, Historic Brattonsville will explore the subject of slave revolts through the eyes of enslaved African Americans, plantation owners and members of the surrounding community.

Civil War Reenactment, Saturday, October 18, 10 am-5 pm, Sunday October 19. 11 am-4 pm.

This event brings to life the war that ravaged America. Activities include battle reenactments, camp life activities, firearms presentations and children's military drills. Battle reenactments at 2 p.m. each day.

Charlotte Folk Society

CFS Gatherings are held at the Great Aunt Stella Center, begin at 7:30 PM and are family-friendly, free, and open to the public; donations are greatly appreciated.

September 12: Traditional and contemporary folk music by two of the country's very best singers and songwriters, Steve Gillette & Cindy Mangsen

October 10: Blues singing, guitar picking & storytelling by Roy Book Binder. Mentored by the Rev. Gary Davis and South Carolina's Pink Anderson, Book Binder is the real deal!

Historic Charlotte

www.historiccharlotte.org 704 375 6145

Pinewood/Elmwood Cemetery Tour, Tuesday, October 28

Guided tour by Lynn Weis. Check website for schedule and details.

Fort Dobbs State Historic Site

438 Fort Dobbs Road, Statesville, NC 704 873 5882

<http://www.fortdobbs.org>

Eighteenth Century Trade Faire, Saturday and Sunday, October 4-5, 10 am - 4 pm

This event focuses on the civilians whose lives were disrupted by the French and Indian War. Indians, tradesmen, militia, soldiers, and others will set up their camps around Fort Dobbs and allow the public to experience a snapshot of life in the 1750's. The event will feature a recreation of an April 1760 Indian raid, as well as scholarly lectures by guest speakers.

Kings Mountain National Military Park

SC Hwy 216. I-85, Exit 2 in North Carolina. Follow the signs. 864-936-7921

<http://www.nps.gov/kimo>

Trades and Crafts with the Backcountry Militia, Saturday, September 13, 9 am to 5 pm

The Backcountry Militia will demonstrate a variety of crafts and trades that were used in the 18th Century. Meet an 18th Century Doctor, learn how to roll musket cartridges and other skills.

Battle of Kings Mountain Encampment, Saturday and Sunday, October 4 and 5, 9 am to 5 pm

Militia encampment with living history demonstrations. Check web site for details.

228th Anniversary of the Battle of Kings Mountain Tuesday, October 7, 9 am to 5 pm

This year marks the 228th Anniversary of the Battle of Kings Mountain. The wreath laying ceremony begins at 11 am and the Overmountain Victory Marchers arrive at 3 PM followed by keynote address.

MHA Docents
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1601 South Wendover Road
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