

MHA NEWS

Dinner Meeting

Monday, September 29, 2008

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

Fellowship Hall

At Trinity Presbyterian Church

3115 Providence Road



Dinner Program Topic

"Legacy of the Polk Administration"

The September program on the 29th will feature Scott Warren who will make a Powerpoint presentation concerning James K. Polk, eleventh President of the United States, and his wife Sarah. The legacy of the Polk administration is huge. Details about it and his significant contribution to the American scene will be shared. For those who want an interested recent read on President Polk by one of his descendants, check out Polk's Folly by William R. Polk, formerly a former professor at the University of Chicago and founder of the Adlai Stevenson Institute. It mentions Mecklenburg County.

Captain Jack History

Google has undertaken a project to digitally publish a voluminous store of old library publications which are no longer subject to copyright. I recently was asked to research Captain Jack and was surprised to easily find a publication entitled Sketches of Western North Carolina, Historical and Biographical by C.L. Hunter. Published in 1877 by Harvard Press, it is a complete genealogical history of the Jack family from its Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama

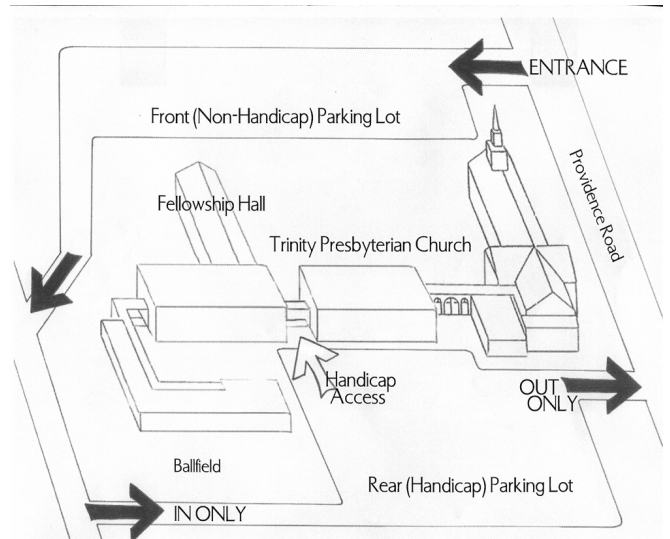
and Texas connections. It has lots of nuggets of information including the fact that three of Jacks descendants were lawyers who went to Texas and became part of the movement to take it from Mexico. The first Texas declaration of independence was made in Goliad, Texas and was called the "Mecklenburg of Texas".

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



Remarks from the President...



As we approach the Fall of 2008, we have much about which to be grateful! This was recently emphasized during a trip my wife and I took to Baltic cities in Russia and a former client state. You could feel, see, and

experience the devastating malaise associated with repressive regimes. It was depressing. I was sorrowed to bear witness to the character of a country and people still struggling for some small measure of freedom and individual liberty. I came to appreciate even more the reasons our forebears fought a revolution to ensure that they and their children would not have to experience an oppressive boot on the neck.

Moving on to other matters, please mark your calendars for these meeting dates in 2008: September 29th and November 10th; and in 2009, March 30th and May 18th. Your program co-chairs Jane Johnson and Kathy Herran will once again perform wonders! Last year we learned about Pineville, Sharon, the Morrison family, and Elmwood Cemetery. We learned of distinguished citizens and elephant trainers!

The September program on the 29th will feature Scott Warren who will make a Powerpoint presentation concerning James K. Polk, eleventh President of the United States, and his wife Sarah. The legacy of the Polk administration is huge. Details about it and his significant contribution to the American scene will be shared.

I would like to take a moment to review accomplishments of this past year. Your Docents led by Alice Bostic, and Re-enactors led by Jim Williams distinguished themselves in many events throughout the region. Some of the most prominent involved supporting the May 20th Society in the celebration of the May 20th events on the Square as well as a celebration at the home of former Mayor John Belk which took place in June. The latter event was special in that it featured the unveiling of the model of the Captain James Jack bronze, the Spirit of Mecklenburg, which will be sculpted and cast during the next

18 months. The unveiling featured Charlotte's prominent artist and historian, Chas Fagan. His paintings and sculptures are placed in the National Gallery, Rotunda, White House, an aircraft carrier, and other significant venues. He was selected by a committee from over twenty artists who submitted proposals from here and abroad. The MHA connection? Kay Majeski suggested I meet with him five years ago and introduce him to the legacy of our community. He loved the story, painted an oil of the ride of Captain Jack, got involved in the project and ultimately submitted a miniature for consideration. Not just a man-on-a-horse in a stationary position, this piece features an animated rider taking his mount across a stream at full gallop! It will be located at the intersection of Kings Drive and Fourth Streets in a monumental setting. Witnessing the unveiling and passing the hat to contribute Euros toward the \$500,000.00 purchase price were a delegation of visiting dignitaries and business people from Mecklenburg, Germany...complete with a film crew! The delegation loved the MHA costumes, rifles, and May 20th barbecue! The delegation was accompanied by the Chair of the County Commission and other local political figures. It was a great occasion! And your MHA is entitled to take some credit for the genesis of this event both in spirit and in finances!

Turning to another unique project in, who can forget the picture of Jim Williams on hands and knees, sweat on his brow, laying brick to restore the Spratt gravesites in Settler's Cemetery. As you are aware, this is a continuation of Linda Dalton's mission to ensure that Settlers is maintained as it should be. Great work Jim!

And I would be remiss if I did not mention the July 4th article by nationally-recognized columnist George Will which appeared in the Charlotte Observer. The article used "Mecklenburg County" as his byline in the review of a new book about the revolution by a Cambridge historian. It is entitled, The 4th of July and the Founding of America. That book includes a recount of the events of the Mecklenburg Declaration. Recognition by the English historic community of our history is indeed a coup! Marion Redd speculates that it was fruitful to have previously sent copies of the Chain of Error to David McCullough, Ken Burns, etc.

These projects and others would not be possible without contributions from our membership. Your MHA stretches a dollar about as far as it can go! The Board has only allowed small increases to keep up with inflation in order that meals and mailers can be provided without a deficit. That said, we need some help. The current balance in our treasury when we finish the Settlers Cemetery Project will be about \$25,000.00. Prior to that expenditure, our balance was about \$50,000.00. We have no staff and no other expenses. All we have is what is left over from dues payments. Yet, from time to time we are approached to provide assistance or seed money for worthy projects. Some of them include assisting the UNCC Library, funding Docent's activities, contributing to the purchase of the William Davidson clock, helping with the Captain Jack statue, and funding the Catawba Valley Art inventory. Our involvement is very specific and in small amounts. At this time, we could use some additional funds. I believe that balance is low. I feel we need to set a goal of raising additional ten thousand dollars. That is about a hundred dollars per member. The MHA Board has never pushed it members to make gifts or entered the "arm twisting" business. No Board member will contact you about this goal. All it can do is gently ask that you all "prayerfully consider" making a charitable gift to the MHA this year to help bring our treasury up to a level which will permit us to continue to make some of these worthwhile contributions to the history community. When we all took typing in the Twentieth Century, we used the phrase, "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party". Let's use it now! Now is the time for all good men and women to come to the aid of the MHA! Any gift, no matter the size would be welcome and would be put to good use. Let's see what we can do!

From the Docent Committee

Happy New Year everybody! Wait a minute. It is not January yet but, it is September which always feels more like a new year than January ever did. Remember how excited you were to begin a new school year. It was time to meet new people and set new goals. I want to challenge all our wonderful MHA members to take a page from that book and set some new goals toward learning more about history. The docents work hard to offer our community a variety of interesting speakers on the first Tuesday of each month September through June. We would love to see more MHA members joining us for our meetings as we start a new fall season. Exciting speak-

ers, great refreshments, easy parking and a warm welcome make this a highlight of the month for those of us who attend regularly. You do not have to be a docent. Our meetings are open to the public. You can come just for the speaker at 11AM, join us earlier for refreshments or come at 9:30 for more refreshments and our business meeting. It is your choice. We will be at Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church at the corner of Tryon and Sugar Creek.

Charlie Williams was the featured speaker for the September 2 meeting. If you have seen him on your PBS station you know he is an accomplished inter-

preter of the life of Andre Michaux. Michaux was a fascinating person whose work still resonates within the world of botany. On October 7 our speaker will be Ann Evans from the Wm. Elliott White Homestead in Fort Mill. Ann was our first speaker for the history classes we offered last winter and had 75 people glued to their seats for over three hours listening to the story of the early Catawba people. I think they would have stayed all day if it had been possible. See what you will be missing if you do not attend these programs. We hope to see you there.

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 19th 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 call Linda Dalton, 704.364.1618.

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



"Preserving Mecklenburg's Heritage"

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