Dear Members,
This past year has seen multiple challenges for the Foundation and the maintenance of its properties. In February 2020, a tornado hit the Reid House resulting in some broken windows, damage to the roof and partial destruction of the wall at the side of the property. The additional challenges related to the pandemic made repairs difficult at best. Weather caused a delay to the addition of a handicapped ramp and brick patio for several months. It’s been tough, but our Board Members have risen to the challenge and have diligently overseen all the repairs and new construction. One last hurdle remains: that of updating the landscaping that also has suffered due to the vagaries of the weather and COVID-related delays. However, we continue to move in a forward direction with the projects detailed above, and we have high hopes that when we are at last able to open the Reid House for rental, these upgrades and new facilities will enhance the visitor’s experience. It may have been a stormy year in more ways than one, but we can see the light beginning to peek through the clouds, making a brighter path for us going forward! Thanks to all of you for continuing financial support by being members! Wishing you a happy Spring!

Becky Hayes-Willard, President

North Carolina Pottery: A Tradition in Clay

Few areas in the country are as well associated with pottery as is North Carolina. Before European settlement, clay was transformed into pots and useful vessels by the Cherokee and our native Catawba Indians. With the arrival of Europeans, a number of styles flourished in several corners of the state. Most notably, a German tradition of decorative slipware and lead-glazed redware was produced by the Moravians around the Salem area.

The English and Germans who settled in Seagrove in the mid to late 1700’s first produced redware with local clay. But by the 1800’s, most had switched to salt and alkaline glazed stoneware fired at a higher temperature, making it more durable. Pottery was popular in this rural area as it provided extra income for families while fitting around the farming schedule.

Seagrove started with five or six families making utilitarian pottery with the abundant clay found in the area. Methods were passed down from generation to generation. As cans and glass replaced pottery for storage of food, the potter’s trade suffered. In the 1970s utilitarian pottery was no longer in favor and potters started experimenting with new forms, glazes, and colors. Art pottery was introduced. Over the next several decades Seagrove was home to over 100 different potters, supporting the largest concentration of potters in the world outside Japan.

Pottery L to R: Swirl ware Pinch Pot, by Burlon Craig; Chinese Red and Teal Vase, by Vernon Owens; and Catawba Pottery Owl, by Master Potter Sara Ayers.

(Article continued on last page)
Foundations

JOIN or RENEW TODAY for 2021
All Memberships are for 1 Year – January to January – and include free admission to all
MHF Community Meetings & Events

_____ Individual/Family $30
_____ Patron $100
_____ Sponsor $250
_____ Donation

Enclosed Amount _______________________
_____ I would like a written receipt for my taxes
_____ I would like tickets to visit the Matthews Heritage Museum

Name ____________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________

City ____________________________ State _______________ Zip ___________

Telephone ______________________ Email __________________________________________

Mail to: Matthews Historical Foundation, P.O. Box 1117, Matthews, NC 28106
Or go to www.MatthewsHistoricalFoundation.org, and pay with PayPal

The Matthews Historical Foundation and the Matthews Heritage Museum are the keepers of our town’s history. The Foundation has saved two important structures, the Reid House (1890) and the Massey-Clark House (1879) as well as bringing our history to the public through the museum. Additionally walking and driving tours of Matthews, as well as two books and a CD have been produced. We hope you will consider becoming a member of the Foundation and support our efforts to preserve our history for our children. Once we are past Covid, we will once again be giving tours to our school children, hosting lectures and special events, and bringing two or three new exhibits every year. Most recently we were able to record the history of Crestdale, an African-American neighborhood.

Consider Becoming Part of our History Team!

Barbara Stegall aka Mrs. Ellie Reid

Her faith, family, and friends are precious treasures to docent Barbara Stegall. Growing up in the Presbyterian faith, her parents and extended family were always active within the church. During her childhood, a love for church and history grew by browsing huge scrapbooks of church history compiled by her aunt, a historian. Barbara is now dedicated to church life as weekday preschool director, Women’s Bible study host, and member of the prayer team. (She with Art attend Stallings UMC, c. 1911)

In 42 years of marriage Art and Barbara have shared joy in the birth of their twins, John Stegall and Mary Catherine Harrell and five grandchildren. Her pastimes include reading, knitting, and grandchildren. Art and Barbara love seasonal trips to Oak Island. Four generations still enjoy times together on the island at the “little cabin in the woods”.

Meeting and making new friends are a joy in Barbara’s life. With typical “southern” questions of “Where are you from?”, “Where did you graduate high school?”, there’s usually a connection to people, places or events (aka History.) After retirement in teaching Barbara joined the MHM as a docent. Enjoying her volunteer time once a month (often tours for school classes), she assisted in planning a museum Girl Scout badge and contributed to research for the Crestdale project. At the spring lawn party, Barbara began learning interpretations for all rooms of the Reid House. She became well versed on the home and its residents, the Reid family. Barbara assumed the role of Ellen “Miss Ellie” Reid, alongside her husband, Dr. TN Reid (Joe Brandenburg) for special events. Said to be a natural in the role, Barbara renders well her “slow southern drawl”. At the Christmas Teas, Women’s Club members have named her in jest, Dr. Reid’s “second wife”! Barbara is incredibly happy to be active in the community and to share with others the history of Matthews through the Historical Foundation and the Matthews Heritage Museum.
We Remember

On December 11, 2020 one of Matthews “lights” was extinguished. Alice Elizabeth Russell passed after a short illness. Anyone who lived in Matthews any length of time probably encountered her, noticeable in her matching outfits, down to socks and shoes! She was a devoted member of Matthews Presbyterian Church, where she was one of the first women to be elected a Deacon and Elder and first woman Clerk of the Session. She assisted her mother in writing the history of the Matthews Presbyterian Church. For 35 years she worked for the Ruddick Corporation. A long-time resident, she was most supportive of the Matthews Historical Foundation and a member of the Matthews Woman’s Club. She was always ready to help!

Another loss to the historic community is Tom Cannon, Board member of the Matthews Historical Foundation for almost 5 years. He passed peacefully at home on January 31, 2021. He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Barbara Scott Cannon, and two children. Tom enjoyed gardening and spearheaded the maintenance of the grounds and gardens at both the Reid House and Matthews Heritage Museum for a number of years, and served to guide the set up of the Victorian Lawn Party for several years.

A Sunny Saturday, A Blue Bike and a Quarter in My Pocket (3rd in series of 4)
by Diane Adams, Foundation Board Member

Stop 5: The Bank of Matthews (now gone). The bank was where the townspeople conducted their financial affairs with the help of Miss Alice Harkey, who was the long-time teller. But my Saturday morning business required meeting with the bank president, cousin Edward, whose office was in the back where he sat in his swivel chair and conducted his bank business. If I timed it right on Saturday morning, I’d go up to the teller’s window and ask Miss Alice if he were available to see me. She would go back to see how busy he was and then come out and say, “Mr. Funderburk can see you now.” He had a little stool next to his desk that I would sit on while we chatted. He’d end the conversation by saying, “Diane, where are you going next?” The answer was always the same, “Next door to the grocery store. I think I need a little bit of candy this morning.” He agreed that was a good idea and then he asked the important question, “Would you like a little bit of money to help with your shopping?” This is the moment I always tried to practice my diplomacy. “Well, if you have a little extra that you weren’t going to use, that would be nice,” and he’d reach in his pocket, coins jingling, and lay them on his desk where I was allowed to select several pennies, and only the pennies, for my visit next door. Giving him a hug and reminding him that I’d see him at church tomorrow, I went to the next stop through the back exit from his office.

Stop 6: Funderburk’s Grocery and Meats (now gone). Going out the door of cousin Edward’s office, the bank being in the same building as the grocery store, one went through the hardware area and by the meat counter managed by Mr. Forbis, who Dad (Charles Funderburk), always said was the best butcher in the state. I always stopped to see Mr. Forbis who would ask how many meat bones he should save for Dad’s hunting dogs today. He’d put the bones in the cooler for Dad to pick up when he did his shopping that afternoon and then he would ask, “How about you little lady? Could I interest you in a steak or two?” He always kidded me like that, but I told him, “No, I am headed up front.” He’d just smile and wave me on, knowing that up front was the candy counter and oh, what a candy counter it was! Tootsie Roll Pops in every flavor, Bit-o-Honeys, Mary Janes, lemon drops, wax bottles, jawbreakers, Fireballs, and to round out the assortment was the weekly pack of Luden’s Cherry Cough Drops which were not in the candy counter but close to the register. These treasures were put in tiny paper bags and taken to the front counter for checkout. There, they had to be emptied again and, depending on who was “ringing up” that day, the cost of the transaction always varied. On rare occasions, the candy was totally free. On other occasions, the cashier would ask me how much money cousin Edward had given me and that was the price of the purchase. I don’t remember, even at times when I had to spend some of my quarter allowance, not ever having enough money to pay the bill. Those were the days!
From the Director’s Desk:

In September we were happy to reopen the museum after being closed for 6 months. Attendance had begun to build until we had to shut down again in mid-January. I am pleased to announce, as of March 4th the museum is open once again. Hopefully for good!

Despite dealing with Covid, a great deal of work is getting done at the museum. I never expected several people to ask to become docents during this second shut down, but that is what happened. I was able to train two new docents in January, helping replace a few who had to resign. Meg Stevens just received her graduate degree from UNCC in history, and Mary McClure is a former real estate agent who lives in Matthews Glen (formerly Plantation Estates). We heartily welcome both!

In mid-January I was finishing my work on the Heritage Trail signs after working on the project for almost a year. I had continued to interview more residents from Tank Town, which led me to the knowledge that a child born to Ablow and Greenlee Stewart (early residents of Tank Town) was still living! I was able to interview Mary Louise Stewart (88), and have since learned of other family members who have additional pictures, as well as Ablow's bible. Shirley Stitt Hailey was most helpful in leading me to these new contacts. Thank you! I don’t know when the signage will be finished, but I am hoping in the next six months the new trail will be dedicated! You all will be invited!

For the last month I have been working with Board member Diane Adams on creating a Board Notebook. This will be of considerable help in sharing the history of the Foundation, best practices of operation, and duties of the members and operating committees. As an all volunteer Board, operational information is critical. As a new member is recruited they will be given a notebook and attend an orientation so that they will be knowledgeable about the organization as quickly as possible. Thanks to Diane and others who are working on compiling this information.

Barbara E. Taylor

Museum Awarded Honor

The Museum was recently notified by the State Archives of North Carolina that it was selected to receive one of six consultations in 2021: “Preserving and Sharing Community Histories Online” from the Traveling Archivist Program.

We were informed that the committee members were especially impressed with the work the Museum has already done to inventory and transcribe documents in the Dr. Henry V. Massey collection, which will be the focus of the consultation. Once organized, a portion of the collection will be digitized so others will be able to search the documents online. The collection contains over 700 documents, and approximately 70 letters.

The Dr. Henry V. Massey Collection was given to the Museum by Kevin Furniss and his sister Jennifer Nemes, the great-great grandchildren of Dr. Massey. Their great-grandmother was Daisy Massey, youngest daughter of Dr. Massey, and his only child born in the Massey-Clark House, which serves as the home for the Matthews Heritage Museum. From this collection, we learned the original size of the house, the year it was finished, as well as family information.

The Traveling Archivist Team includes: Erin Lawrimore, UNC-Greensboro Archivist, who is the committee expert on arrangement and description and is a board member for the N.C. Community College Archives Association; Lisa Gregory, Program Coordinator for the N.C. Digital Heritage Center, who is the committee expert on digitization. She and/or her assistant, Digital Project Librarian, Kristen Merryman, will provide overall guidance and digitize a small subset of our collection. Adrienne Berney, Outreach Coordinator, State Archives of N.C. is a preservation expert and can offer advice on storage environments and housing. The other museums given this award are Eastern Cabarrus Historical Society and the Museum & Archives of Rockingham County. We are excited to be able to make this fascinating collection available to others.
Foundations

“If it would only stop raining”

Noah and his contractor are standing, in the rain, alongside a partially constructed Ark. The contractor turns to Noah and says, “you have to keep in mind, that the completion date was only an estimate. But, don’t worry we’ll get it done. Of course, this miserable rain is gonna delay it some more.”

What should have taken a few weeks, has marched on now for several months. Yes, rain is no friend to an exterior building project, nevertheless a project that relies on a firm foundation. However, the good news is the finish line is in sight as the bulk of the brick paver patio is now in place. The patio has shaped up nicely. The field brick has been set in a herringbone pattern to not only provide visual interest, but to ensure a nice tight interlocking bond. A darker contrasting paver acts as a border and helps define the edges of the patio, providing for a nice finishing touch. The body of the patio is 20’x40’ sized for a tent up to that size. The patio should be able to accommodate 50 to 100 people, depending on the function type.

Once the weather breaks, this long awaited project will be a welcome addition to the grounds of the Historic Reid House. Weddings and assorted events will able to make use of the beautiful Reid House grounds while on solid ground, I mean solid brick. If it would only stop raining….

Anne and Chuck Bennett—Board Members

While Anne was born in Wisconsin, Chuck is a native North Carolinian. They attended UNC-Asheville and later were married in Asheville. Chuck and Anne chose Matthews as the community to raise their family and have been Matthews residents since 1985. Chuck and Anne have three children and two grandsons. Chuck is a veteran, having served in the U. S. Air Force. He attended N.C. State University for graduate work and then UNC Chapel Hill for his law degree. Anne taught in the Charlotte Mecklenburg School System for 29 years, mostly at Matthews Elementary School, where their children attended school. Chuck was a partner of Weaver, Bennett & Bland, P.A., a Matthews law firm for over thirty years.

Anne had been a member of the Matthews Historical Foundation Board for several years, and Chuck served as counsel to the Board for many years. Both Anne and Chuck became members of the Board upon Chuck’s retirement.

Chuck also served as a N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Commissioner for over ten years, serving as Commission Vice Chairman, Chairman of Cold-Water Fisheries, Chairman of Non-Game and Endangered Species, and Commission representative to Clean Water Management Trust Fund and National Heritage Trust Fund. During his law practice, Chuck served as a Board member and President of the Matthews Chamber of Commerce, a Board member of the Matthews Rotary Club, a Board member of the Levine Senior Center, Chairman of the Matthews Mayoral Task Force on Education and on the Boards of United Carolina Bank and Branch Banking and Trust Company. Chuck now serves as Vice Chairman of the Wildlife, Outdoors and Recreation Foundation, a non-profit organization working with the NCWRC to develop funding for outdoor recreation and wildlife habit preservation.

In retirement, Chuck and Anne partake in things they can do together, such as gardening, playing with their grandsons, and taking trips to the Blue Ridge Mountains. Anne also enjoys crafts, cooking, reading, and caring for her family. Chuck is an avid hunter and fisherman (especially trout fishing). Now as members of MHF Board Anne and Chuck are assigned the primary duties of caring for the yard, plantings, and general upkeep of the historical Reid House. Both are extremely interested in history and find serving on the MHF Board a rewarding insight into the past of Matthews.
The Catawba Valley in western Carolina also saw a small concentration of potters who used alkaline glazes made by combining hardwood ash or crushed glass with clay and water. Alkaline glazed stoneware takes on a brown or green color once fired in the kiln. Catawba Valley potters chose alkaline glazes over salt glaze, the predominant stoneware glaze used in America at the time. Many in this area were “folk potters” throwing pots and churns, though often with faces or snakes as decoration.

There are a small number of potters near Asheville and in the Sanford region where deposits of clay are plentiful. This exhibit will show the variety of pottery that has been produced in the state over the past 200 years. Examples from the Seagrove and Catawba Valley areas as well as Sanford will be on display. Both historic utilitarian pieces and more recent art pottery are featured. The exhibit will be on display from March 20 to August 28, 2021.

Pictured on left: Miniature pieces from L to R: Birdhouse with yellow ochre glaze, unknown potter; Jug & Pot with lid, red ware and brown glaze by Celia Cole; Piggy Bank, tobacco spit glaze by B. B. Craig

Pictured above: Traditional 19th c. Jug (found at Rosedale) and 19th c. Milk Crock, Unknown potters.