Dear Friends,

If 2020 seemed to last forever, 2021 was just the opposite and flew by in a blur! Although we had to adjust for another pandemic year we at the Matthews Historical Foundation have stayed quite busy!

We were able to oversee the completion of some improvements and repairs at the Reid House, including a new coat of paint. We participated with the African American community in the dedication and opening of the Crestdale Heritage Trail. The Foundation, working with others in our community, helped with the restoration of Roseland Cemetery and the unveiling of an historic marker. We even found time to for some fun, participating in the Matthews Chamber of Commerce Art Walk 2021. Of course, none of this is possible without the time, talent and support of a wonderful MHF board, our museum director, museum docents, M HF members and all our wonderful volunteers. Thank you for another special year with Matthews Historical Foundation.

I wish you a joyous holiday season and Happy New Year!

Becky Hayes Willard, President

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Hi everyone! I’m Erin Barrett.

My love for history began at Lee University in 2003. Dr. Hoffman, Dr. Ward, Dr. Walkes, and Dr. Barnett welcomed students to join college conferences, teas, and other events. I was also part of the New England Studies Program at Lee. We traveled to Massachusetts, Connecticut, and North Carolina studying Colonial and Native American history. Boston will always be one of my favorite places to visit. If you’re a student, please take advantage of your college’s study abroad program. History is more than facts and dates, but a story of lives, experiences, hope, and memories. We all hope to learn from the past.

Museums offer multiple opportunities to share these experiences. I’m currently a docent at the Matthews Heritage Museum. I’ve been volunteering since October 2013. I’ve been lucky to have been selected as Volunteer of the Year in 2017. I rode in the Matthews Alive parade that year, and kept the sign. Thank you for the many years that I’ve spent with all the docents, the board, and Barbara Taylor. I’ve enjoyed giving tours to local Matthew’s residents, out-of-towners, and folks visiting from abroad. We’re a good group of folks. I’m hoping that we’ll get together for the holidays this year.

Since being at the museum, I’ve learned how history is accounted for, preserved, and displayed. I learn something new with each visit. It’s quite a lovely thing to have one’s eyes opened and experiences broadened. I know that my docent friends would agree with me. They have been such a joy to work with. Cheers to many more years together!

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Introducing Erin Barrett

Erin Barrett

Docents

Erin Barrett
Joe Brandenburg
Pat Browning
John Camenga
Gloria Clackum
Gregg Coleman
Sarah DelPrete
Wilson Goodson, Jr.
Julia Hanson
Clyde Kiser
Rhonda Lewis
Mary McClure
Elinor Minshew
Lanell Owenby
Meghan Sharpe
Kathy Shonts
Barbara Stegall

MHM Director
Barbara Taylor

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Winter 2021

Foundations

From the Director:
I thought some of you might be interested in a project I recently completed. The American Alliance of Museums supports a program known as the Museum Assessment Program (MAP). A museum can apply to complete a MAP in several areas such as Organization, Education, or Collections. As a long-time museum professional I was asked to review the Fairbanks House and Museum in Dedham, MA, the oldest wooden house in the country, built in 1637! I thought it would be an interesting challenge and who wouldn’t want to step into a home that old?

In early October I spent a day and a half talking to the staff, board, and supporting members about the challenges they face. It is an incredible structure, with the last addition added in 1800! It has been lived in by 8 successive generations of Fairbanks. Also on the property is a 1912 kit house from Sears that was originally used by the caretaker. Although in operation since 1904 as a museum, there is no ADA bathroom available on site, and they lack supporting space for educational programs, offices, and storage. However, they have land, and a wonderful opportunity to build what they need, and to convert the Sears House into a second historic building.

Unfortunately, the Board has been unable to make a decision as to how to move forward. Hopefully, my written report will help them prioritize their needs and act on them in time for a tremendous 400th Celebration in 2037!

We participated in the Fall Into Matthews event that was held in October. It was nice to see people out and about enjoying the weather. We bought a tent and a sign for the museum so we can continue to participate in events like these. Our docents engaged 369 festival goers sharing information about the museum with them! Hopefully this will continue to bring new visitors to the museum.

Barbara E. Taylor

Traveling Archivist Program
As you may remember, early this year I applied to a program called TAP, or Traveling Archivist Program, a program supported by the State Archives of NC, the NC Digital Heritage Center, and UNC-Greensboro. We were selected one of six organizations state wide that would receive instruction on arranging archival materials, as well as having a collection scanned, digitized and placed on NC Digital. In August I met with Adrienne Burney who was delighted that we had already inventoried the Dr. Massey Collection which we chose to have digitized. Several years earlier, descendants of Dr. Massey brought more than 700 documents to the museum, including photos of family members, receipts from purchases and taxes, and around 70 letters written by family members to Dr. Massey. These documents have provided insight into the original configuration of the house, as built, and the date it was constructed. We once thought the house was finished in 1880 because that is when the deed was signed, but the house was actually finished in early 1879, and Massey occupied the house in March. In the first years that we owned these items the docents and I transcribed the letters, creating a typed copy of all of them, and then placed the originals in chronological order.

We decided that only the letters, certain important receipts, and photographs would be digitized. Half of the documents have now been scanned and were returned in early November. The second half of the collection was picked up. The first documents can be accessed on line at https://lib.digitalnc.org. Click on “Contributors” and then on the Matthews Heritage Museum.

It is exciting to know that these documents will now be available for people doing research on the Massey family and other issues of the times. Eventually the documents will be searchable by name.
New Class of Volunteers

As many of you know the Museum lost a number of docents who decided during COVID they could no longer volunteer at the museum. In total we have lost 7, and a few are still in the wings, waiting for things to improve. It was a deep loss for us… about 1/3 of our volunteers! Amazingly, during the summer I had several people inquire about volunteer opportunities, and I began collecting names to start a new training class. I had four sign up to take training, but unfortunately one had to drop out. As of October 21 the three remaining volunteers have taken the initial five weeks of training. We warmly welcome our new docents who we think bring great talent to the group!

Gloria Clackum is a retired nurse who has lived in the community for over 30 years, and has seen Matthew grow. Julia Hanson is a retired librarian (our second) who has family roots in Matthews and has already lent a clock to our current exhibit, as well as sharing information about a family property that still is standing. John Camenga, our other retired librarian and railroad enthusiast, was happy to see Julia at a recent docent picnic, as the two have known each other through their work uptown! Our third volunteer is still working and making a great effort to get to the trainings. Rhonda Lewis is a docent for the Harvey Gantt museum for some of their exhibits, but is excited to share her talents with us as well.

The docents are our lifeblood, without whom we would not be able to function. We are hoping that each of them finds joy in joining our “family” and will stay with us a long time! As I am writing this, I have several new individuals who are on my “waiting” list, so hopefully in the New Year we will have a full complement of docents to celebrate!

Barbara E. Taylor, Director

A Warm Welcome to Tina Whitley

Tina Whitley was recently voted onto the Foundation Board. She writes of herself “I am the proud mother of 3 great kids, Melissa, Allison and Max. They are each doing well, and I have 3 grandchildren who are growing up too fast! We moved to Matthews in 1990 after growing up in Maryland, on an island and living on a boat in the summers, moving to Malibu, California when I was 8 and growing up there. After attending Pepperdine University and UCLA, majoring in Psychology, I married and moved to the High Sierras, Arizona, then to Raleigh, and Morehead City.

I have been involved in the Matthews community for over 30 years and love our town. I served on many non-profit boards, and church and town boards, including the Matthews Historical Foundation! After serving as Executive Director of the Matthews Chamber for 13 years, I decided to do something I could do for the rest of my life and became a Real Estate broker. I love my work and helping people with their Real Estate needs, whatever that might be!

Thank you for allowing me to serve again on the Historical Foundation Board.”

Thank you Tina for serving!
Available at the Museum
Matthews Remembered DVD......$15
Matthews Memories Cookbook…...$21.95

If you have a local artifact to donate, please call the Museum office 704-708-4996.

Visit our websites
www.matthewshistoricalfoundation.org
www.matthewsreidhouse.org
www.mattheritagemuseum.org

Roseland Cemetery Dedication
On a picture perfect day a number of citizens gathered to unveil the sign at Roseland Cemetery, an African American burial site just off Monroe Road. In 2017 the Taft Development Group purchased the property for development and promised to care for the graveyard. After years of neglect, many wanted this historic site to be refurbished and preserved. This long forgotten spot where former slaves and African Americans are buried was cleaned up by a group of volunteers led by Hoke Thompson, a former Eagle Scout, in February and March 2021. Taft provided dumpsters and extra topsoil to fill in gravesite depressions, and installed a fence around the cemetery perimeter.

The Matthews Heritage Museum did research on the cemetery, tracking who was buried there. After several months, we have a list of 61 names of individuals who are buried there, though most do not have stones (Names soon to be listed on the Matthews Heritage Museum site). The earliest known burial dates to 1916 when Calvin Henry Boyd, first minister and founder of Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church was laid to rest. The last known burial dates to 1957 when Reginald Leon McMurray was buried there as an infant. We believe 10 or 11 former slaves are also buried there. It is a lovely peaceful place to take a stroll and learn a bit of history, located at the rear of the new complex “The Address Galleria Apartments”.

Gifts from the Museum
Give your friend or neighbor, aunt or son a gift of history this year! Are they native or a newcomer to Matthews? The Museum has several gifts that they might like! How about a cookbook filled with yummy recipes and interesting stories of folks from Matthews’ earlier days. Matthews Memories is $21.95. Or maybe they would prefer a CD? Matthews Remembered is a look at life in the 1930s, 40s and 50s by early residents, and information about R. F. Outen Pottery for $15. Give the gift of membership to the Foundation and Museum and receive a quarterly newsletter, tickets to visit the museum, and discounts to special events. This is a gift to you and us!! Levels are Individual/Family $30, Patron $100, or Sponsor $250. Or maybe you would like a commemorative brick in the sidewalk in front of the museum for $100. We have stocking stuffers of pick-up sticks ($2.50) and Jacks ($2) and wooden tops. We also have a frameable print of the Matthews School or a plaster model of it, that is paintable. Stop by and see what is available! Your purchase supports the Museum and the Foundation!