

Introducing Our New Docents

On May 5th I started a new docent training class with 5 students. This year's class brings many new talents to the table. We are enjoying each other's company and learning together about Matthews history, its citizens and its businesses. This year I am trying to tape record each session, so if a person misses a class, they can make it up by listening to the tape. They completed their classes on June 1, many have already listened to a tour given by a docent, and several will be giving a "training tour" to family and friends. We hope by mid-June we can call on them to help!

Our new docents include:

Eileen Linz who just moved to Matthews (in May) to be closer to her son. Still learning the streets, we got her to the museum! Before retiring, she worked in New York City at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

Althea Meade-Hajduk, is a native of Jamaica, who has training in museum studies! She visited the museum several months ago and asked to become a volunteer. I was happy to call her when I was ready to begin a class. She is a potter and learning to make chocolate!

Michael Meath also moved to the area within the year and loves it here. An early career kept him on the road backstage with theater productions. When he wasn't working in the mornings he took advantage of visiting museums throughout the country.

Susan Misner loves history and after high school she took a job demonstrating weaving and spinning at Conner Prairie Living History Museum.

Sarah DelPrete is a returning docent and former history teacher. We are delighted she can find the time to volunteer in between homeschooling her four children!

We warmly welcome these folks to our ranks!



Michael, Eileen, Althea, Susan

Dear Friends,

Wishing you all a happy start to summer! It's a time to be excited for lots of things- longer days, school vacations, juicy watermelon, and poolside fun. It's also a time to be excited about another favorite pastime – checking out the museums and historic sites in your area!

A fun activity to consider during these summer months is checking out some of the history we've worked hard to preserve right here in Matthews. I'm pleased to announce that the docents from the Matthews Heritage Museum will be giving tours of the historic Nancy Reid House on John Street in Matthews. The Reid House, built in 1890, is a beautiful example of Victorian Queen Anne-style architecture, complete with a gables roof, charming cupola, and delightful "gingerbread" embellishments. If you've only seen the house from the outside, come in for a tour and learn about life during the time of the Reid family and enjoy looking over the lovely antique furniture and décor.

I hope you enjoy the vacation season, and that you build some moments into your summer plans to experience some the local history in your community and beyond!

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Susan Misner

Lanell Owenby

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Barbara Taylor

Introducing Gregg Coleman

We never know where our paths will take us. Opportunities present themselves and we too often create reasons why it is easier to just stay in our comfort zone and watch the years come and go. Who would have thought, a person born in Memphis, TN, would move to Chicago at the age of two, graduate high school in Gary, IN, earn a degree from Indiana University, and retire from General Motors Financial Corporation after 30 years? My career began in Chicago, with the daunting task of repossessing cars. After nine years, I was transferred to Iowa. After eighteen years and a few hundred GM offices closing, I was mercifully transferred back to Chicago. However, after only two years, the Chicago office received orders to close. Here I am, only two years from retirement eligibility, but only a few GM offices still in existence. What do you do? Well, you end up at GM in Charlotte.

My transitioning would not have been as fulfilling without my amazing wife of 38 years, Sharon. We have two children, Bryan, and Lauren. They now, also live in Charlotte. My son is co-owner of a property preservation company, and my daughter works at the Post Office.

Owning a home on the Charlotte side of McKee Road means voting in Charlotte, even though my life is most affected by what happens in Matthews. A few years ago, Barbara Taylor gave a presentation on Tank Town, AKA, Cresdale the oldest Black community in Matthews. As a member of Jonesville A.M.E. Zion Church which has been in Matthews since 1884, I know some of the local Black history. Since most people have never heard of Jonesville, I wondered what she would say about Tank Town. Imagine my delight when her presentation was much more than a footnote. I asked to become a volunteer at the museum. I also volunteer as a financial coach through Servants Heart. I hold numerous positions at Jonesville, including chairman of the Trustee Board and superintendent of Sunday School. One Sunday, when you're out and about stop by Jonesville, and meet your 138-year-old neighbor.



A Man Needing Little Introduction

William "Kress" Query is a life-long citizen of Matthews. He attended Matthews graded school until 9th grade, the highest grade then, and continued High School at East Mecklenburg graduating in 1958. He attended Charlotte College (now UNCC) earning a degree in Engineering Technology. The day after graduation he started working at Estul Tool and Manufacturing in Matthews. He held a number of jobs there, beginning as a Tool Engineer, then Chief Engineer, Vice-President and finally President. He owned half the business and sold the company to ABT in 2012, continuing as President until 1975 when he retired at age 75.

He met Gwen Query who has been the love of his life and his best friend. Despite his full career, she supported his dreams to serve his town in politics. In 1969 he ran for Town Commissioner and was elected with the highest number of votes, designating him Mayor Pro Tem. When then Mayor Pars Lemmond asked Kress to share his vision for Matthews with him, Lemmond asked the Commissioners to make him Mayor, which they did. He was the youngest Mayor to serve at 29. He served 6 years and started the zoning of Matthews and prepared Matthews for future growth. In 1993 Kress was elected Matthews Commissioner and served in that position till 2017 giving 30 years of his time for the town. His public service was recognized when he received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine from the Governor.

Kress has been a life-long member of Matthews Methodist Church, and started and chaired the Methodist Kindergarten Program even without funding from the Church. He grew up in the Shelton House across the street from the Reid House and spent a lot of time with Miss Nancy Reid. Sarah Redd, Nancy's niece inherited the Reid House when Nancy died. She asked Kress if he would start the Matthews Historical Foundation as a 501(c)3, so as President he could see that the house would be preserved for future generations. Once again, returning to the Foundation Board, he continues to keep his promise with the other members of the Foundation.



From the Director:

For many years I have wanted to take an inventory of the Reid House furniture and art objects. While preparing for the Reid exhibit it took on greater urgency as I wanted to use items given to the Foundation by Sarah Redd. As I did research, Paula brought in some photos of the family too small to display in the Reid house, several items of China from Nancy Reid, and books in the family collection. Paula Lester, Eleanor Morris, and I met at the Reid House and were able to record where the various items came from. Eleanor Morris was on the first Board of the Foundation and purchased many items to furnish the house, while others were donated by local citizens. Paula and Eleanor were able to document almost all the pieces, including the few that were family items. These family items came together to help interpret the Reid exhibit now on display. When the exhibit comes down, the Reid items and photos will be catalogued.



The follow-up activity that is happening now is continuing the research on the Reid family and specifically the Reid House. This is in preparation for developing a new tour for the Reid House focused on the family and the architecture. Approximately two years ago, before the pandemic I promised to open the Reid House four times annually, with docents giving tours. Five docents and I are currently meeting, discussing our goals, getting the necessary information together to create "talking points" for the a tour of the house. At the first meeting we agreed that our focus would be on the house and the people who lived in the house, and their stories. As such few items on display are from the Reids we will only point out items that they owned.

Already I have discovered through deed research that Edward S. Reid, who built the house, bought the property from his wife's parents! And, furthermore, he didn't sell the house to Ellie until 1896, but allowed her and her two children to move into the house about a month before she married Dr. Reid. I am re-reading what has been written and clearing up any discrepancies. At our next meeting we will walk thru the house and determine what stories can be told where.

Thanks to Joe Brandenburg, aka Dr. Reid, Elinor Minshew, Pat Browning, Kathy Shonts and Barbara Stegall aka Mrs. Reid for helping me with this project! We hope by the fall to introduce the new tour, once docents are trained.

We are also beginning a similar documentation of the items at the Depot and will be meeting with Becky Hawke, City Manager, to discuss the best way to preserve and care for the items.

Enjoy the summer!

Barbara Taylor

Pepsi: Born in the Carolinas

Many people know that Caleb Bradham a pharmacist in New Bern invented Brad's Drink in the late 1880s, later to be known as Pepsi-Cola. His aim was to create a drink that was delicious and healthful, aiding digestion and boosting energy. He was confident his drink would be a taste-good, cure-all for modern ailments.

The Matthews Heritage Museum will have on display an exhibit on *Pepsi: Born in the Carolinas* from July 9 to November 19, 2022.

In 1905, as the drink's popularity grew, Charlotte was one of the first two franchises of the new company. Thus began Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company of Charlotte, Inc. Henry Barksdale Fowler, who was to become known to his employees as "Mr. Pepsi-Cola," bought the first Pepsi franchise from the drink's inventor Caleb Bradham and began doing business in a barn beside the city's blacksmith shop on East Trade Street, near the railroad tracks.

Over time Charlotte's franchise grew and because of Fowler's forward-thinking management style, the parent company often introduced new items in the Charlotte market. The Pepsi swirl bottle, which was Fowler's idea, was test marketed in Charlotte. By the early 1950s, more than 60 delivery trucks rolled out of the South Boulevard plant every day.

Fowler ran the business more than 65 years. Fowler was the only franchisee to continuously bottle and distribute Pepsi while hundreds of others were abandoning the national soft-drink company. The company was later led by Dale Halton, Henry's granddaughter who became President in 1981. Under her leadership she exponentially grew the business. Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company of Charlotte employs 350 workers and has an annual sales volume of 15 million cases or \$74 million. Halton's success was recognized in 1988 when she was named "Charlotte Business Woman of the Year."

The exhibit not only shares the history of Pepsi-Cola in Charlotte, but displays a number of memorabilia from the company.



Variety of Pepsi-Cola Bottles

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Edited by Barbara Taylor, Director

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.



www.matthewshistoricalfoundation.org
www.matthewsreidhouse.org
www.matthewsheritagemuseum.org

A Map of Early Matthews?

I have undertaken some research to find a map of Matthews that obviously existed in the early 1870s. When Dr. Massey signed his deed with E. J. Funderburk his lot was "No. 12". As I researched the Reids I wondered where Dr. Bell lived with Ellie when married, and found he owned lots "No. 6 and 8". My best guess was that Marcus Biggers might have been the surveyor around that time (1874-1875). I sent out my inquiry to the Historic Roundtable members and got a few responses. One historian is going to check out a file of Biggers papers in Raleigh! Andrew Pack at UNCC identified some other lot numbers for the Methodist and Presbyterian churches. John Blythe found information saying a W. H. H. Houston owned the land where the depot was to go "at the Southwest corner of Lot 12". He also uncovered several other newspaper articles that in 1874 Houston was in trouble for forgery. Subsequently two lawyers, DeWolfe and Brown from Charlotte posted a sale of many pieces of property including Houston's and in the description they referred to our depot as "Houston." Newspaper articles that pre- and post- date the article calls it Matthews Depot. It appears for a time there was a competition between the two names for the town's depot! I am still hoping to find the original map, buried somewhere. One newspaper article said that the map was on display at Brown's office! My head is spinning! Do any of you know descendants of Marcus Biggers? Do papers exist for Biggers, DeWolfe, or Brown? I think we might be able to plot the properties if we find enough numbered lots and use our knowledge of where people lived. How cool would it be to be able to "show" the early map of landowners!



A Visit from Kevin and Amy Furniss

On May 20th Kevin Furniss and his wife Amy visited with us in the afternoon, taking a tour of the museum with Julia Hanson. Kevin is the great-great grandson of Dr. Henry Massey. Several years ago, he and his sister brought us approximately 700 Massey documents which has given us new insight into the house and how it was built, as well as information on the family. Kevin's grandmother Daisy, who was born in the Massey-Clark House and was the last child of Dr. Massey and his second wife, married Eddie Alexander a descendant of Hezekiah Alexander. It was wonderful to see Kevin again and be able to share with him the many things we have learned about the house, and his family. He continues to do research, trying to find the land where Daisy and Eddie Alexander lived.

Event in July

Barbara Taylor, Director of the Matthews Heritage Museum, has extensively researched the African American community known as Crestdale and was asked by the Town of Matthews to create a series of signs along a walking trail that was dedicated in 2021. Over the course of several years, Taylor undertook the research to understand how this community grew alongside Matthews from 1878 to the present. She interviewed local residents, and researched the history of the churches, businesses and families living in the area. Her research resulted in an exhibit on Crestdale and the Heritage Trail through that neighborhood. Her talk on July 7 at 2 p.m. at the Matthews Public Library will address her research and the resulting Heritage Trail. Please call the Library at 704-416-5000 to reserve a seat!

Wish List:

The Museum Docent Library has outgrown its bookcase thanks to donations from a variety of folks. If you have an extra book case measuring no more than 45" high and no wider than 32" wide, we would love for you to consider making a donation. Thank you!