

Was Matthews almost called Houston?

One of the first panels that you encounter in the museum asks what's in a name. It goes on to explain that Matthews has been known to have 3 names.

The area was first called Stumptown as it was said that settlers in the area were taking trees down and leaving stumps, and that it was almost impossible to turn a wagon around without hitting one. The second name was legitimately given to direct mail to the area. John Fullwood was named our first postmaster in 1825. His home contained a store and was the stopping point for the stagecoach. Letters were directed to Fullwood for almost 50 years, though we had many different postmasters during that time.

When the train came to Matthews in 1874 the Carolina Central Railway decided to name the Depot for one of their directors, Edward Matthews. The town, when it was incorporated five years later, took the name Matthews.

Yet, recently, I stumbled on a fourth name that was assigned to the depot for a brief time! The depot was known briefly as Houston! Documentation is in the Charlotte Democrat from April, 1875. How is this piece of history lost to us? Years ago I learned that Dr. Massey lived on Lot 12. Additional research led me to see many early purchases of land referring to a "lot number" indicating there was a map of the town. I started searching for this map and came upon a fourth name for Matthews.

I wondered who owned the land that would become Matthews? The answer was W. H. Houston! On August 17, 1871 Houston bought 4 tracks of land containing 115 ³/₄ acres from W. A. Noles for \$2500. Houston must have purchased this property in anticipation that a town would grow up around the train stop. The description of one of the tracks of land leaves no question regarding its location. "Bounded as follows: Beginning at a stone in the Great Road (Monroe Road) leading from Charlotte to Monroe.... containing 40 Acres lying on Four Mile Creek and about 11 ¹/₂ miles South of Charlotte." W. H. Houston owned the land where the rudimentary depot was located, and called it Houston Depot. However, Houston became deep in debt, and got in trouble with the law in August of 1874. Consequently, he declared bankruptcy, his property was seized and "lots" were sold to recoup monies he owed. The sale was conducted by two Charlotte lawyers DeWolfe and Brown. The newspaper stated that the lawyers had this map on display at their office! One of the lots sold in April 1875 was to Carolina Central Railway Company "for and in consideration of the sum of Ten Dollars and the further consideration of erection of a Depot at Matthews." The Carolina Central Railway changed the name of the Depot from Houston to Matthews.

A Great Party!

After several years absence due to Covid, the Foundation held a fundraiser at the Reid House to welcome back folks to celebrate the holidays and the new year in store. The house was fully decorated for the season



by the Matthews Woman's Club Service League, music was by Chris Melton,

and everyone enjoyed the company, and the yummy food by Sante!

Above: Kress Query, Tina Whitley, Lee Myers

Right: Elinor Minshew, Becky Willard and Jim Taylor



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Introducing Julia Hanson

Julia grew up in Eastern North Carolina but has lived in the Charlotte area for the past 35 years. She graduated from St. Mary's School in Raleigh, then went on to get a BA in English at Wake Forest University. Go Demon Deacons! She lived in New York City for the next ten years, working for brokerage firms (Morgan Stanley, Clayton Brokerage), and earned an MBA from Fordham at night. Marriage and four children brought her to the Charlotte area.



A new home brought a new career path. She earned an MLIS from UNC-G and joined the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library as an Educational Specialist. The WWW was new at that time and her first job was to develop and train Internet classes as well as classes on Microsoft Office programs (Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Publisher). Julia traveled throughout the system teaching classes to the public. In 2004 she was nominated for and won a New York Times Librarian of the Year award. As computers became more and more essential to the work world, the library decided to open a computer facility specifically designed to help job seekers. The Job Help Center was located uptown at Main Library. Julia was the JHC Manager until 2018 when she retired.

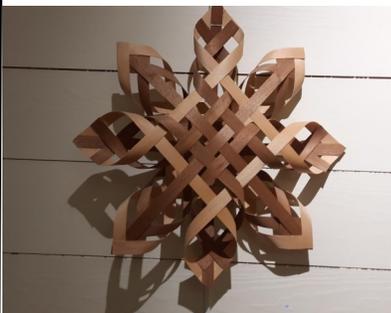
Retirement presented the opportunity to focus on hobbies. One of her favorite pastimes involves genealogical research. It turns out that her great, great, great grandfather moved to the Charlotte area back in the early 1800s. He and his children stayed in the area and married into local families, some of whom were from the Matthews area. This family connection led Julia to join the Matthews Heritage Museum as a docent. Other hobbies include travel. She's been to Central America, South America, Europe, N. Africa, and Asia. She also enjoys crafts – knitting, crocheting, and needlepoint. Most importantly, she enjoys doting on her four, soon to be five, grandchildren. Welcome Julia!

Woven Treasures: Baskets Old and new

Baskets were originally designed as multi-purpose vessels to carry and store materials and to keep stray items about the home. Multiple cultures developed techniques for making baskets dating back to 8000 BCE. Baskets are traditionally constructed from stiff fibers and can be made from a range of materials, including wood splints, whicker, reed, pine needle, and cane. While most baskets are made from plant materials, other materials such as horsehair, metal wire, even plastic can be used. Traditional baskets are generally woven by hand.

The exhibit Woven Treasures: Baskets Old and New opening December 9, will feature a wide variety both traditional and artistic. Several examples of the traditional Nantucket basket, tightly woven with rattan and cane from New England are on display, as well as several Gullah baskets made with sweet grass from Charlton. The exhibit will feature a variety of baskets from the last 50 years, made by modern artists as well as traditional basket makers who were trained by their enslaved relatives.

One of the oldest baskets dates to the 1970s, crafted by a well-known Black craftsman from Mecklenburg County, Leon Berry, who learned the trade from his grandfather, a former slave.



Modern creations have been woven by Susan Brandenburg, member of the Dreamweaver's Guild.

Several programs are being planned with this exhibit that runs through April 1, 2023, including a program on Leon Berry scheduled for February 9, 2023, to be held at the Matthews Library. We are also hoping to schedule a basketmaking workshop. TBA

Carolina Snowflake woven by Susan Brandenburg

From the Director:

As I sit down to write my last letter for the newsletter, I have lots of thoughts and emotions. I have been director of the museum just 4 months shy of 10 years, starting on April 1, 2013. There is much I have been able to do to set the museum on stable footing. Probably the best has been recruiting and training the numerous docents and volunteers who have contributed so much to the museum. Lovingly and joyously, from tending the flowers, donating computers and a camera to the operation, decorating and touring hundreds of visitors, this strong army has made this museum what it is today.



Along with my other duties I have been able find time to conduct research for the local community. Beginning with Dr. Massey's family, we had a windfall when the family gave us over 700 documents, photos and letters that helped us understand more about the house and the community in 1879. Extensive research on Tank Town led to a major exhibit on that neighborhood along with greater recognition and understanding on how it developed. That in turn, led to the Heritage Trail through the area sponsored by Parks and Recreation, a teaching unit for third graders, as well as a larger permanent presence on Tank Town in the museum's exhibits.

The many exhibits over the years, while some difficult to think up, have by and large added much to the repeat visitation of many loyal followers and drawn newcomers to the museum. From pottery and basketry to lighthearted Teapots and Teddy Bears, they have entertained old and young alike. With exhibits on MARRA, the HELP Center, and the Red Cross we have been able to document what those agencies have contributed to the community.

It has been a good ride. But now it is time for someone else to take on the reins, and I will gladly step down to pursue a number of activities, including the publication of a book on Tank Town, as well as traveling and documenting my family's genealogy. Fortunately, I do not plan to move, so I hope to stay active in the area, and count on seeing many of you frequently. My thanks to all of you, Barb

Another Discovery!

Have you ever wondered why Matthews has a Main Street that runs through a neighborhood and is not a "main street?" The answer is found in the 1888 T. J. Orr map of Mecklenburg County, and in another map dating to 1911.

The road known as Monroe did not follow the straight path it does today. As it entered Matthews from Charlotte it curved to the right and followed today's Main Street. It came out on S. Trade and went by the stagecoach stop at Fullwood. Monroe continued South on Trade Street and then followed on today's road of Pleasant Plains, coming out to what is now Monroe Road where the Rock House is. A close look at the map of downtown Matthews reveals as late as 1911 there was no East John Street and what would eventually become today's Monroe Road. However, Charles Street is present on the map, running into Tank Town and beyond following today's road. I would love to know when Monroe became the road we know today!

Barbara E. Taylor

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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.**

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www.matthewshistoricalfoundation.org
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Dear Members,

2022 was a busy year for the MHF. We capped it off with a holiday event, the "Reconnect with the MHF" party at the Reid house. It was a festive affair, catered by Sante, in the atmosphere of cheery Victorian splendor, thanks to the decorations from the Matthews Woman's Club Service League.



We also enjoyed some jolly holiday tunes spun by Chris Melton, and we even had an old-fashioned sing along! I'd like to thank Tina Whitley and Bill Helms for coordinating this event, and the rest of our board for making it such a memorable occasion. Wishing you and your family a Happy New Year!



Bill Helms, Board Member

Bill Helms is a native of Charlotte. He went to school taking college prep courses at Garinger High School and attended Greensboro College a small Liberal Arts school majoring in Marketing & Business. After graduating he landed his first job at WBTV in marketing. He moved to Atlanta in the early 80s to work for a large advertising agency and was a radio producer. After returning to Charlotte, he worked for a large marketing firm as a Senior Production Director working on large marketing campaigns for Lowe's, GE, Key Bank, Bell South, Bank of America, and others.

He was hired by First Union/Wachovia, later known as Wells Fargo to work in corporate marketing as Vice President and corporate leader. He served in the role until early retirement in 2007.



Bill has always been involved and is an avid community activist. He is currently Vice President of Matthews Historical Foundation handling PR/Marketing/Community Meetings and showing/rentals for the Historic Reid House. He is also President of Matthews Human Services Council, a group of 34 Non Profits that collaborate helping those in our community. He was awarded the Nancy Glenn Service Award in 2017 for contributions helping those in need in our community. He is the President of the HOA where he has lived for 35 years, Sardis Forest Patio Homes. He is an active member of the Matthews Chamber of Commerce. Bill is Past President of Charlotte Regional History Consortium and was awarded in 2019 their highest honor the Annual Dandelion Award for service in promoting the History of the 12 County Charlotte area. He is also a member of Charlotte History Roundtable, Historic Rosedale Advisory Council, Preservation North Carolina, Charlotte Business Guild, Carolina Celebration, an annual Fundraiser for those living with HIV/AIDS, AD Council Charlotte. He served on the Matthews History Museum Advisory Committee, where the Matthews Heritage Museum idea was conceived and eventually became a reality in Downtown Matthews. He has served 15 years on the Foundation Board.