



Mint Hill Historical Society

JANUARY 2006 NEWSLETTER

January 2006

- 19 – Board Meeting 6pm Rebecca Junker Griffin Conference Room
- 19 – General Meeting 7pm Ashcraft Schoolhouse
- 24 – Farmers Market Meeting Mint Hill Historical Society Office
- 24, 25, 26 – Bain School 4th Grade Classroom Tours
- 25 – Mint Hill Arts Meeting Mint Hill Historical Society Office

February 2006

- 8 - Mint Hill Arts Meeting Mint Hill Historical Society Office
- 11 – Volunteer Orientation (1) 10a-12p Ashcraft Schoolhouse
- 11 – DAR Meeting Mint Hill Historical Society Office
- 18 – Volunteer Orientation (2) 10a-12p Mint Hill Historical Society Office
- 20 - Board Meeting 7pm Rebecca Junker Griffin Conference Room
- 22 - Mint Hill Arts Meeting Mint Hill Historical Society Office
- 25 – Volunteer Orientation (3) 10a-12p Mint Hill Historical Society Office

March 2006

- 8 - Mint Hill Arts Meeting Mint Hill Historical Society Office
- 11 – DAR Meeting Mint Hill Historical Society Office
- 20 - Board Meeting 7pm Rebecca Junker Griffin Conference Room
- 22 - Mint Hill Arts Meeting Mint Hill Historical Society Office

April 2006

- 17 - Board Meeting 7pm Rebecca Junker Griffin Conference Room
- 22 - EVENT "Cooking and Curing" Herb Sale, medicinal and cooking demonstrations,

Mint Hill Meanderings By Margaret Barach

Our General Meeting this Thursday, January 19th, 7:00PM in the Ashcraft Schoolhouse in the Carl J. McEwen Historic Village. Teacher, Sid Sowers, will take students through their First Day of School – 100 years ago! General meetings are open to the public – all are invited! This will be preceded by a Board Meeting (in the office) at 6:00PM.

We hope to meet many of our new Officers and Board of Trustee members.

Friday the 13th was my lucky day when I found a shiny new metal paper dispenser at the Hood's Cross Roads Food Lion with The Mint Hill Times debut edition! Welcome and thank you to Laura C. Long for stepping up to the challenge of keeping us informed. Newspapers of all kinds are a valuable resource to be mined for information by historians, genealogists, and students in the future. Check www.minthilltimes.com as it is being developed.

An example of using publications as resources is the August 9, 1989 Southeast Magazine which printed this about the Surface Hill Gold Mine on Surface Hill Road off Truelight Church Road:

"It was opened prior to the Civil War. Olen Mullis's grandmother, Elizabeth Ann Mullis, owned property next to the mine and several miners boarded at her home. Mullis, 79, says two or three shafts were dug on the hill before the Civil War, then the mine closed during the war."

"It reopened around World War I. After that the company went bankrupt and a Pennsylvania businessman named Capt. Matherson bought it. He found the original mine shafts which were by then filled with water and he couldn't find any workers willing to go in and reopen it for fear of drowning."

"The Wilson family now owns the property, which includes a former mining house."

This is the Assay Building which the Wilson family donated to the Mint Hill Historical Society and is now standing on the back of the property. Come help with the restoration.

We are thankful for the Barnabus people, the Encouragers, among us for getting things moving. Whether they are from Long Island, Charlotte, Midland, or the Midwest they strengthen the hand of the visionaries here in Mint Hill.

In reading history and relating it to students today, we turn up such eye openers as this quote from a 1930's era paper (The Mecklenburg Times): "Tarheel dairymen are finding that it pays to test their cows. One Guilford county dairyman says that he could afford to build a new barn now that he knew what his cows were doing." So science, math, and economics intrude into the bucolic countryside.

This reminds me of a favorite Hood story about a local farmer of Lutheran persuasion whose response (when my father suggested a shed would be a good idea to protect the man's tractor) was "I can afford to loss it". Such confidence!

School Consolidation

From The Mecklenburg Times about 1935 we read:

“In 1923 the people of the Arlington district visited with the Flowe school district and voted a special tax for building a new consolidated school. The Arlington, Allen and Flowe schools gave way to the fine new building which is now Clear Creek High school.

The new building is located thirteen miles east of Charlotte on the Charlotte-Albemarle road, near the little village of Allen. It is a one-story building of brick veneer having eight large classrooms, an office, a library, and a large auditorium. It has all modern conveniences, such as water, electric lights, and steam heat. The Clear Creek consolidated school has an enrollment of two hundred pupils. It is only a young high school and has a great ambition to grow.”

An article written by 8th grader Mattie Lee Courtney further describes her new school as set in “a beautiful pine grove about one-fourth mile west of Allen” with “a large auditorium that will seat about five hundred people”. The building was finished the last of October, 1924. So the tax was levied in 1923 and the building was ready to use in 1924 with an enrollment of 200 students.

From Blair to Flowe

In 1887 the Blair school near the banks of Clear Creek, in Clear Creek Township “was torn down and moved about two miles north to a site on the land of J. Lee Flowe, a former resident of the community and the name was changed from the Blair to the Flowe school, with W.A. Woods, W.L. Barr, and J.E. Lemmond as school committee.

Flowe School was “a frame building and like most schools of that time, very poorly equipped. It was a one-teacher school with an enrollment of about sixty pupils, ranging in grades from one to seven. The school house was situated in an oak grove thirteen miles east of Charlotte, about half a mile north of the present Charlotte-Albemarle state highway, on the road leading across from the highway to Concord. It was about seven miles from Harrisburg, the nearest railroad station. The post office, which was in charge of Mr. J. Lee Flowe, was half a mile distant from the school.”

In 1913 the old school was torn down after about 26 years of use and replaced with a new one room building on the same site.



So it was just ten years later in 1923 that the people were convinced that the small schools were a “waste of time and money, where the teacher had four or more grades to teach. In a case like this the teacher could not give each pupil the proper attention, and naturally, as the child grew older, he became discouraged and stopped school before completing the grammar grades.”

Schoolmistress, Violet Hartis, takes Country Day Students through scribing, recitation and citizenship class at the Ashcraft Schoolhouse. There is no nonsense in Mrs. Hartis' classroom or it's off to the Duncce stool.

Attending a One-Room School

by Gene C. Griffin, September 7, 2005

A poem “based on an interview with 91-year-old Henry Lee Mullis who attended Albans School on Morgan Mill Road in Union County. Later in his life, he lived in Mint Hill.”

*The teacher walked to school seven miles each way,
And in season he picked cotton along the way.
He often would pick it before and after school.
He was a strict man and always stuck by the rule.*

*The school was in session seven to three each day.
Sixty dollars per month was the teacher's rate of pay.
His salary was three hundred sixty dollars per year,
As the school was open only six months of the year.*

*The one-room schools were about five miles apart,
With apparently no age limit when one could start.
There was no charge for the students to attend.
To get an education on these schools they did depend.*

*The age of students ranged from five to twenty-one,
And some of the older ones had just begun.
With eighty-five students in a one-room school,
The one teacher certainly had to enforce his rule.*

*The school had a row of windows on each side,
And a blackboard on the back wall, very wide.
There was one door at the front of the schoolhouse,
And out at the back there was only one outhouse.*

*There were no separate grades, just classes for all.
The teacher would pick a person and he would call.
The student would stand up if he had to spell a word,
Or go to the blackboard to work a problem he heard.*

*The students learned to sing the alphabet song,
And say the alphabet backward, no letter wrong.
A roomful of boys and girls, both young and old,
Would certainly need a teacher who was very bold.*

*At recess the girls and boys played ball together.
No store-bought ball with a cover of leather;
They made a ball of old socks, unraveled and wound,
But a hit did not have a baseball cracking sound.*

*When it came time for the thirty-minute lunch-break,
A baked sweet potato was all most students would take.
Then they went back inside for the afternoon classes,
And a lively mixture of young and old lads and lasses.*

Gene read his poem at the dedication of the Ashcraft Schoolhouse at the Grand Opening of the Schoolhouse. How many of you remember the agony of being assigned to write a poem? Gene actually enjoys the process. Copies are available at the office.

His poem about hog killing time stirred memories of one of our members who never saw the event, but remembers her father's death bed instructions on how to preserve meat. She realized later that he was trying to make sure she knew how to survive without him.

Our Meat House looks excellent. Maybe someone knows how to make a mouse proof ham out of plaster to hang inside for effect. A McConnell family story from the 19th century post war period was of the great shortage of salt to preserve meat. People had to take an oath to support the government of the former enemy in order to be issued salt. If a veteran could not bring himself to so swear, his wife might oblige. Sometimes people were so desperate to get salt that they would mix the dirt from a smokehouse floor with water and boil it to try reclaiming the salt.

Allen School

Wilma Allen, a 6th grader at Clear Creek School in the 1930's had her report printed in The Mecklenburg Times:

“The school at Allen was organized in the fall of 1920 and conducted for three years in the Presbyterian church. The church building was a large one-room structure painted white both inside and out. The school was organized because Arlington, the nearest school was more than two miles distant, and the parents around Allen station wanted a school nearer their homes. The furniture consisted of a bookcase, a teacher's desk, one chair, several black boards and the church benches. The name Allen was given the school in honor of T.W. Allen, a prominent citizen, who lived in the community. The committeemen were T.W. Allen, T.D. Hough, and C.E. Robinson. Miss Cora McNeill of Vass, N.C. taught the first school term of eight months. There were seventy-five pupils enrolled the first year.”

It would seem that some improvement occurred in the pupil-teacher ratio. Apparently Miss McNeill had 75 pupils in 1920 while the History of the Bain Class of 1950 mentions starting first grade in 1938 with Miss Mary Alice Washam and 50 pupils. Ten years later in 1948, Miss Mary Jane Jones of Matthews School had 46 first graders (without benefit of pre-school for most of them).

Take Me To Your Leader

Welcome to the new members serving on the Mint Hill Historical Society's Board of Directors! As we welcome members to the Mint Hill Historical Society, we must also thank those who are rotating off the board and have served us so generously. The progress that has come about in the past years, is nothing short of remarkable. It is our amazing board of directors who are the movers and shakers. We thank you all for your dedication to the preservation of history in Mint Hill.

For the last four years, the Mint Hill Historical Society has been under the leadership of Presidents, Jerry and Sue Helms. It is difficult to not recognize their outstanding spirit and dedication to the Mint Hill Historical Society and the Carl J. McEwen Historic Village. With sincere gratitude for their devotion, we thank them both.

Board of Directors – Class of 2006: Benny Davis, Judy McWhirter, Martha Strohm, Lewis West, Ray Hough, Tina Ross, June Hood, Bobby Long - **Class of 2007:** Jim Black, Sr., Sue Helms, Bob Rowland, Ellis Tavin, George McDonald, Stan Davis, Jim Richardson, Vic Orr – **Class of 2008:** Becky Griffin, Jerry Helms, Don Wilson, Ron Heath, Gene Griffin, Shirley West, Billy Kiser, Sam McGee

2006-2008 Officers – Co-Presidents: Vic Orr and Don Wilson, Co-Vice Presidents: Bob Rowland and Ron Heath, Treasurers: Judy McWhirter and Ray Hough, Secretaries: Shirley West and Margaret Barach

Each newsletter we will introduce some of the directors to the membership at the Mint Hill Historical Society.

Rebecca Junker Griffin, Becky, Board member, attended Hickory Grove, McClintock, East Mecklenburg and Queens College. Life long member Philadelphia Presbyterian Church. Married to Bill Griffin with two children and six grandchildren “all of whom live and work in Mint Hill”, Becky is a Founding member who works with a “desire to preserve the rich, unique heritage of the people and places that molded this community.” while working full time at Griffin Oil Co.

Sam McGee, Board member, was with a national retail chain in Charlotte, NC, Jacksonville, FL, and Asheville, NC, retail sales, credit manager, and store manager; territory manager, international point of sale and record keeping firm. He founded and operated his own firm for the past 35 years, Mint Hill resident over 40 years; Life member, True Light Church. He and wife, Midge Huntley McGee, have one son, four daughters, and seventeen grandchildren. Sam is volunteering with the MHHS because he has a “sense of community responsibility to assist in preserving history of our area, and as response to numerous requests from members of the Society.”

George E. McDonald, Board member, was born in Gainesville Florida. He met wife of 36 years, Suzanne, while serving a tour of duty with the Navy in Illinois. Mint Hill resident for 20 years and has worked at Alltel for 28 years. George participated with his four children in the Boy Scout and Girl Scout programs and continues to volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America. Woodworking and other activities in the outdoors are talents that George brings to the restoration projects in the Carl J. McEwen Historic Village. In order to know where we are headed, we must know where we've been.

Ray J. Hough, Co-Treasurer, has attended Philadelphia Presbyterian Church 45 years, resident of Mint Hill for 28 years. He retired from his C.P.A. practice in Mint Hill to be C.F.O. at United Packaging & Industrial, Inc. Hobbies include travel, hunting, playing the mandolin, and time with grandchildren. Ray and his wife, Kay, are married for 45 years with three children and five grandchildren with another due in April. Ray wants “to preserve local history in a fast changing society because history will be lost if this is not done.”

Robert B. Long, Board member, educated at Brief, Fairview, and Bethel Schools. He served as Radarman 3/C, US Navy from 1944 to 1946. Employed in furniture and real estate. Charter Member of Earp-Williams VFW Post 4059, Charter Member of Mint Hill Masonic Lodge and Mint Hill Volunteer Fire Department. Married to Betty Wilson; daughter, Dr. Debra J. Hunt of Duke Medical Center and University; son, Robert Michael Long of Belk Services. “A community that remembers and preserves its past tends to attract a proud citizenry.”

Many Many Needs...

The Wish List complete with quantity and price per item is available at the office. Examples include office and restroom supplies, 1900's Reproduction Primers for the school, tool boxes, garden/hand tools, cleaning kits, artifact storage/archival materials and software, first aid kits, fire extinguishers, cordless drill, quarterly newsletter sponsor, rocking chairs, picture display systems, laser printer, television with video/DVD player, vintage schoolteacher's desk, and always volunteers of all kinds.

Contact Us

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Recent losses to our extended Mint Hill family include James Willard Long, Sr., Peggy Helms, Frank Haigler, Margaret Forbis Duncan and Margaret Roach McManus. Our sincere sympathy to these families.

Volunteer Orientation

Did your New Year's resolution include a promise to help make the world a better place? You can check that promise on your list by volunteering at the Carl J. McEwen Historic Village and the Mint Hill Historical Society.

Archive organization, museum hostess, office duties, building projects, site maintenance, computer work, and a host of other activities need your support. Volunteer hours are very flexible and work at home is available. Orientation will include local history background, museum tours, individual training and a graduation luncheon.

Orientation will take place on three Saturdays, February 11, 18, and 25 from 10-12pm. Please call the office and show your interest to participate in the best volunteer project in Mint Hill. 704-573-0726

The Farmers Market is holding its first meeting for the year at the Mint Hill Historical Society Office. Be a part of this wonderful addition to the Society and the town of Mint Hill on Tuesday, January 24 at 7pm. Market season: May 6 thru September 30

Membership and Renewal Form – Please Cut and Mail

The Mint Hill Historical Society is a non-profit organization chartered in 1985, for the stated purpose of bringing together those persons interested in the preservation of the history of the town of Mint Hill, NC

***Dues due in January.
Life Member?
Join anytime.
Thank you for
continued support!
Questions?
Call 704-573-0726.***

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Level of Renewal or Membership Enclosed:

Individual (one year) \$15.00 _____ Family (one year) \$25.00 _____

Life (one individual) \$200.00 _____

Mail tax deductible check to: Mint Hill Historical Society
P.O. Box 23203
Mint Hill, NC 28227-0272.

Check It Out

The debut issue of The Mint Hill Times featured stories about many local people with a wonderful picture of Violet Hartis in period dress as school “marm” while leading fourth grade students from Country Day School in a class at our Ashcraft One Room School.

Tours can be arranged for public, private, and home schoolers as well as the general public. We have even had a themed birthday party!

The Assay Building is on site and looks much, much bigger up close than when we were just driving by and admiring it from the road. It presents many opportunities for male bonding and maybe Bondo. When restoration is complete, it will provide more space under cover to tell the stories of gold mining, chemistry, industrialization, and the economy of the 19th Century.

A Barn Raising is the next big event for the 200 year old square, hand hewn logs from the Beaver family. The chicken house arrived to fit in with the late 19th to early 20th century.

Work is underway for 2006 Farmers Market season. To help, call Barbara Lowe at 704-545-3999. This was successful for both vendors, customers, and our membership roll.

Thank you to CenterMark for doing tax reports for our non-profit historical society.

Please remember those who volunteer their services to the Mint Hill Historical Society when you are looking for help at your home or place of business.

Many Thanks

- To the Scottish Bank for their support of our lawn service.
- To the proprietors of Abbey Rose for gorgeous Greenery which graced the museums during the holidays.
- To John Black for selling many many Mint Hill picture books. (We wonder if he sold door-to-door magazines or salve as a boy!)
- To Kathy McKeever for a gillion volunteer office hours.
- To Anthony and Lee Finger for their support of the MHHS and our inclusion in the wonderful Town Planner Calendar mailed to each resident.
- To the builders in our village – YOU ARE OUTSTANDING!!!! Thank you for all your time and effort.

Mint Hill Historical Society
PO Box 23203
Mint Hill, NC 28227



*****REMINDER*****

This Thursday,
Jan 19
Board meeting
6pm