

Mecklenburg Messenger

OMGS Archives Hours

10-12 AM Tuesdays, 1-4 PM Thursdays
Visit the website for additional information.

J. B. Alexander's Medical Ledger and Account Book 1855-1871

reviewed by Alden B. Davis

Dr. John Brevard Alexander practiced medicine here in Mecklenburg County all of his professional life. His ledger gives us a rare opportunity to look into the life of a country doctor 150 years ago. He listed visits to each patient, the medicine prescribed and the charge for the visit. Ellen Poteet, who transcribed the ledger, has done an invaluable service by gathering the records for his visits so that the family's entire medical history is in a single place. Dr. Alexander also used the book to enumerate his personal accounts showing items that he bought and items that he sold to others. For instance, page 114 shows the cost of his home built in 1857 for the grand total of \$1,640.30!

What must it have been like to receive a doctor's visit in those days? Purgatives, emetics and medicines inducing perspiration were frequent prescriptions. He often pulled teeth for fifty cents per tooth. He performed an autopsy and brought babies into the world, as well as doing some surgery. But not to worry: if the patient suffered pain opium was freely prescribed. Patients are named, including children and slaves. After the Civil War, black patients are shown under their individual accounts. In addition the book contains detailed information about his guardianship of the six Goodrum children, orphans of James Goodrum.

Dr. Alexander was an interesting person. Born in the Lemley's section of the county in 1834, he graduated from Davidson College at the age of 18. He went on to Charleston Medical College and became a doctor at the age of 24. He and his wife Annie Wall Lowrie had six children. Alex Stowe, one of his great-grandsons, gave the ledger and account book to former Olde Mecklenburg President Selby Daniels. It now resides in the Special Collections Unit at UNCC, along with other items relating to Dr. Alexander.

OMGS Meetings

The April 2006 meeting of OMGS will be held on Wednesday, 12 April 2006 at the **Ray Hall Community Center, Aldersgate**, 3800 Shamrock Drive, Charlotte. Remember the "social hour" begins at 7pm with the meeting following at 7:30pm. We will have Beverly Lawing. Her topic is "Carolina Places in Time." In May we will have our very own Paul Buckley! He will tell us what our ancestors were really like! (Paul switched with Judy at the last minute because he was sick.) Don't miss these great programs!

The Hopewell Branch will not meet but expect to see you at our tent up at the Loch Norman Highland Games. Come out and join us!

A strong supporter of the South, he volunteered for the Confederacy and served for a year as a private before being elevated to surgeon. By 1890, at the age of 54, he moved to Charlotte where he opened a drug store. He was soon elected to the State Senate on the Populist ticket. In 1897, following a stroke, he retired. He spent his time writing books and papers on historical subjects. His three books *Reminiscences of the Past Sixty Years*, *History of Mecklenburg County* and *Sketches of Hopewell* remain an excellent source of information about the formative years of Mecklenburg. He died in 1911 and is buried at Elmwood Cemetery.

This is a soft-cover, indexed book of 134 pages. The pre-publication price until May 15, 2006, is \$13.50. After May 15th the price will be \$16.50, postage paid. Don't miss this chance to learn more about early Mecklenburg County from a man who lived in the time.

Notes on March Meeting

by Mary Utting

A longtime friend of Olde Mecklenburg Genealogical Society, Judy Gibson, Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds, was slated to talk to the group in May. When Paul Buckley, who was scheduled for March, became too ill to fill his assignment, Gibson graciously took his place.

Her talk at the March 8 meeting began with a couple of quotes from Eleanor Roosevelt that she had discovered. The first: "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." And the second: "I think somehow we learn who we are and then we live with the decision."

The speaker then went on to present some of the recent developments in her office and other local government repositories, so useful to genealogists. Since her last appearance at OMGS, she said that the budget for document preservation had improved, so four staffers do some preservation during part of each day. Many old marriage records are quite brittle, so the first action is to put them in a protective sleeve after a process of deacidification. Then they are placed in binders so that they are accessible but not handled directly.

They are currently working on records from 1867-70, 1875-79, 1881, 1882, part of 1883, 1885, 1886 and 1889.

Birth and death records (kept in the Health Department) are not on the web at this point, but they are trying to get them into the system. North Carolina did not begin to keep these records until 1913, so any earlier records are very scarce.

She talked about many people's fear of identification fraud, so there is a growing pressure to put restrictions on access to vital records. Gibson feels that this fear is vastly overblown. She knows of one instance, where a son added Junior to a record to get rid of his debts, but he was caught.

To avoid ID theft only certain people are given certified copies of records. Less than one percent of such crimes occur in the area of public records. She cautioned the group to shred all those sensitive materials, such as credit card offers. Though it pays to be aware, she does believe that too many fears are groundless. She recommended having Social Security number and mother's maiden name removed from documents available to the public.

If someone finds such information on a document, there is a form that can be filled out for removal of it. It will be redacted from the file.

With the opening of a new courthouse, Gibson hopes for more space; she has been given a verbal approval by the county manager. The new building is due to open in December or January, so the final decision will come then. The area that she had been able to set aside for public research has been taken over by the preservation activity.

She recommended correcting errors in family records, if possible. She noted that a portion of birth and death records that contained health information, has been cut off the public copy, to protect the person's privacy. That information now

has to be obtained from a physician.

Gibson told of the terrible loss of records in New Orleans during the Katrina disaster, because there was no computer backup of records. It is impossible to establish legal ownership of property and other such vital matters. She pointed out that old papers are traditionally stored in basements, because buildings cannot support the weight of all that paper. Of course, that's the most vulnerable area in any disaster.

One county had the same vendor in Austin, Texas, that she uses to back up Mecklenburg records. She was very encouraged that this county, which lost everything, was able to obtain the records when the company brought in new equipment and called up the lost files from their Texas database. Thus, in case of local disaster, she believes Mecklenburg records will be available.

Correction to OMGS QUARTERLY Cover

The recent issue of the OMGS Quarterly (Vol. 24, No. 1) had the wrong year on the cover. You may wish to cross out "2005" and write in "2006" to keep the issues in order.

OMGS Past President Dies

Ralph Vincent Spracklin, a past president and longtime member of Olde Mecklenburg Genealogical Society, died on March 22, 2006. Vince, who was a senior vice president at Wachovia Bank, was very active in a number of civic activities. He became involved in genealogy after his retirement.

He is survived by his wife, Evelyn; daughters, Elizabeth S. Wicker, Anne S. Theisen, and Martha S. Orr, and their spouses as well as six grandchildren. Services were held at Myers Park Methodist Church on March 25. Our condolences go to Vince's family.

New from the Carolina Room

by Jane Johnson

2/23/2006 to 3/20/2006

To view the Public Library's catalog for a complete list of holdings, go to <http://www.plcmc.lib.nc.us/catalog/default.asp>

Below are new titles of interest to genealogists in the Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, Main Library, 310 N. Tryon St., Charlotte, NC.

African-American Family In Slavery and Emancipation

Becoming German: The 1709 Palatine Migration to New York
Bright and Gloomy Days, The Civil War
Correspondence of Capt. Charles Frederick Bahnson, a Moravian Confederate
Charlotte and the Carolina Piedmont
East Cooper Gazetteer, History of Mount Pleasant, Sullivan's Island and Isle of Palms
James Hamilton of South Carolina
Keeping the Circle-American Indian Identity in Eastern North Carolina
Orlean Puckett: The Life of a Mountain Midwife, 1844-1939
Perquimans County North Carolina
The Long Lost Journal of Confederate General James Johnston Pettigrew
They Went Into The Fight Cheering (Civil War Conscription)

Alexander Website

Alexanders or Alexander descendants might want to check out a website houseofalexander.com/site/. It describes a book, *A Documentary of Scotch-Irish Alexander History: The People, Places and Events Before 4000 B.C. to 2005 A.D.* The author, Dr. Sarah Alexander-Culton, vows that she has verifiable evidence for each and every genealogical connection.

Interesting Websites

by Carol Rivenbark

Found a few websites that I am not sure if the group is familiar with. The Censustools thing looks slick – the Census tracker form allows you put in census data on a family and then print two or three pages that detail the information for you in a concise form. The timeline thing looks neat too – they include forms that allow you to compare dates/places/events for either two, three or six families. <http://www.io.com/~jhaller/forms/forms.html> Pedigree Chart and Family Group Sheets that can be downloaded and then filled in on the computer for Word and Excel <http://censustools.com/> Downloadable Microsoft Excel program for Census entries <http://www.cs.williams.edu/~bailey/genealogy/> various blank downloadable forms including cemetery trackers, timelines, pedigree charts, correspondence and research logs. Also, in my e-copy of *RootsWeb Review: RootsWeb's Weekly E-zine 15 March 2006*, Vol. 9, No. 11(c) 1998-2006 RootsWeb.com, Inc. <http://www.rootsweb.com/> They mention a free copy in downloadable .pdf of a new magazine – Internet Genealogy available at: http://internet-genealogy.com/IG_subsrw.html The magazine

mentions a Genealogical Search Engine I was not familiar with - www.linkpendium.com

Upcoming Events

Cemetery Restoration: Philadelphia Presbyterian Churchs First Two Sites-Sunday, April 9, 3:00 pm Ever wonder how a cemetery is saved and restored? How to repair tombstones? How to determine the correct spot for a misplaced stone? All this and more will be answered in a program led by Scot Treadwell of Olde Mecklenburg Genealogical Society & Charlie Burdick of the Mint Hill Historical Society. Philadelphia Presbyterian Church was founded in 1770 and is one of the oldest churches in Mecklenburg County. Program will be held in the Griffin Room, Union County Public Library, 316 E. Windsor St., Monroe, NC. Call to register or for more information: 704-283-8184 ext. 224

April 21-23, 2006, the Loch Norman Highland Games, Rural Hill Farm, Huntersville, NC—fun for the entire family! Visit www.lochnorman.org for more information.

The East Tennessee State Historical Society will host the Sixteenth Ulster-American Heritage Symposium in Knoxville, Tennessee, June 28-July 1. Since 1976 this symposium has met every two years in Northern Ireland or the United States. According to a participant, the earlier days consist of scholarly presentations on specific subjects of interest to the researchers. On Saturday, the programs are more general programs for those interested in Ulster Scots.

For details see the website at <http://www.east-tennesseehistory.org/>

Do you know of an upcoming genealogical event? Let me know and I can publish it here. My email is raney1@earthlink.net

Want to Join OMGS?

It's easy to join. Annual dues are \$20 for an individual membership, \$25 for a family membership, \$40 for a sustaining membership, or you can pay \$225 for a lifetime membership. Make a check or money order payable to Olde Mecklenburg Genealogical Society and send it along with your name, address, phone number, email address, and names you are researching to OMGS, P.O. Box 32453, Charlotte, NC, 28232-2453. Our email address is omgs1775@yahoo.com and our website is <http://www.rootsweb.com/~ncomgs/>

Joan Raney, Editor

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DATED MATERIAL INSIDE

OMGS Publications for Sale

<i>Real Estate and Legal Notices from Charlotte, NC Newspapers, 1835-1847</i>	\$27.50 PPD
<i>Mecklenburg County, NC Cemeteries, Volume 1: North Mecklenburg</i>	\$32.50 PPD
<i>Mecklenburg County, NC Cemeteries, Volume 2: South Mecklenburg</i>	\$32.50 PPD
<i>Mecklenburg County, NC Cemeteries, Volume 3: East Mecklenburg</i>	\$37.50 PPD
<i>Mecklenburg County, NC Cemeteries, Volume 4: West Mecklenburg</i>	\$37.50 PPD
<i>1800 Census, Mecklenburg County, NC</i>	\$15.00 PPD
<i>1850 Census Abstract, Mecklenburg County, NC (Includes separate index)</i>	\$17.50 PPD
<i>Index to 1850 Census</i>	\$ 5.00
PPD	
<i>OMGS Surname Index, 2000 Edition</i>	\$8.00 PPD
<i>OMGS Quarterlies: 1983-2003</i>	\$21.50 PPD (4/year) \$8.50 PPD (single) \$2.00 PPD (index)
<i>Cabarrus Revolutionary Patriot Roll, by Cabarrus Gen. Soc.</i>	\$19.00 PPD
<i>My Hometown Pineville, by Joe Howard Griffin, Sr.</i>	\$30.00 PPD
<i>The Presbyterian Gathering at Clear Creek, by Russell Martin Kerr</i>	\$27.50 PPD
<i>The Spirit of a Proud People, by Lois Moore Yandle</i>	\$40.00 PPD
<i>They Married Confederate Officers: The Intimate Story of Anna Morrison, Wife of Stonewall Jackson, and Her Five Sisters, by Kathy N. Herran</i>	\$24.95 PPD

Books by Herman W. Ferguson

<i>Mecklenburg County, NC—Minutes of the Court of common Pleas & Quarter Sessions</i>			
<i>Vol. I, 1780-1800</i>	\$30.00 PPD	<i>Vol. V, 1841 – 1850</i>	\$27.50 PPD
<i>Vol. II, 1801-1820</i>	\$32.50 PPD	<i>Vol. VI, 1851-1860</i>	\$28.50 PPD
<i>Vol. III, 1821-1830</i>	\$27.50 PPD	<i>Vol. VII, 1861-1868</i>	\$28.50 PPD
<i>Vol. IV, 1831 – 1840</i>	\$25.00 PPD		
<i>Mecklenburg County, NC: Genealogical Deed Abstracts Books 10-14</i>			\$27.50 PPD
<i>Mecklenburg County, NC- Abstracts of Deed Books 15-23 1794-1830</i>			\$35.00 PPD
<i>Mecklenburg County, NC: Will abstracts, 1791-1868, Books A-J/Tax Lists 1797-1799, 1806-1807</i>			
		(transcribed by Ralph B. & Herman W. Ferguson)	\$32.50 PPD
<i>Mecklenburg County, NC: A Petition, 1792; Tax Lists 1797-1799, 1806-1808, 1810-1811, 1815, 1823-1824</i>			
		(transcribed by Ralph B. & Herman W. Ferguson)	\$27.50 PPD
<i>Mecklenburg & Cabarrus Counties, NC: Decedents for Whom Loose Estate Papers are Extant</i>			\$16.50 PPD

North Carolina residents please include 7.5% sales tax. Send name, address, order, and payment to

Olde Mecklenburg Genealogical Society
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