



Mecklenburg Messenger

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OMGS Archives Hours

10-12 AM Tuesdays, 1-4 PM Thursdays
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Notes on January Meeting

by Mary Utting

Water has played a vital role in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, history, and it may play an even more vital role in the area's future. That was the gist of a message brought to Olde Mecklenburg Genealogical Society members at the January 2008 meeting by Rusty Rozzelle, who works for the Land Use and Environmental Services of Mecklenburg County.

The speakers' ancestors played an important role in this area, so his connections to the waters are both professional and personal.

He began by describing the magnitude of the waterways. There are 525 square miles of creeks, lakes, and streams in the county, and these provide water for about 800,000 people today. The Catawba River dams create 11 lakes in the state, and portions of three lakes touch Mecklenburg. The largest of these is Lake Norman, which covers 32,000 acres. Mountain Island Lake covers 2,700 acres, and Lake Wylie, 12,000 acres. Norman provides drinking water for the northern towns, while Mountain Island provides 80 million gallons a day for 750,000 people in Charlotte..Mount Holly and Gastonia take 30 million gallons daily from that same lake. Lake Wylie provides 10 million gallons for Belmont and Rock Hill.

There are 3,000 miles of smaller streams, such as Rocky River, Mallard Creek, and Little Sugar Creek, that feed into the river.

The lakes not only supply vital water but also are prime recreational facilities. Rozzelle noted that 10 million people visit the 11 lakes each year, most for boating, and that number is increasing.

Rozzelle stressed the importance of preserving the watershed, something that has become apparent during the severe drought conditions of the past

OMGS Meetings

The February 2008 meeting of OMGS will be held on Wednesday, 13 February 2008 at the **Ray Hall Community Center, Aldersgate**, 3800 Shamrock Drive, Charlotte. We usually have a "social hour" at 7pm followed by the meeting at 7:30pm. Our speaker will be Jim Sasser, whose topic will be "1788 - 1848: The Gold Rush of Charlotte, The Nation's First Gold Rush." In March, we will have Tom Hanchett, and his topic will be announced in an upcoming issue of the *Messenger*. In April, we will have Judy Gibson, Register of Deeds for Mecklenburg County, and she will be talking to us about vital records and identity theft. Come out and join us for these great programs!

The Hopewell Branch will meet at 10am on Saturday, 9 February 2008 at Hopewell. Come out and join us! It will be interesting.

year. He pointed out the developing greenway system, which is becoming one of the finest. So far, 33 miles have been developed; 147 more miles are planned. Duke Energy, which built the 11 dams, is a major user of water to produce power and also to cool its nuclear energy plants. In recent times, the lakes have resulted in an economic boom, as people erect expensive homes, leading to commercial development in outlying areas.

Rozzelle told about the history of water in Mecklenburg. John Lawson, a naturalist appointed by the king to survey what is now North Carolina and South Carolina in the early 18th century, wrote in his diary that the area was "abounding in many and delightful rivulets." He drew sketches of local wildlife and also was impressed by the native Americans, members of the Catawba tribe, who relied on their namesake river for survival.

Among the early colonists to settle here were a number of millwrights, who were given special incentives to come. By 1800, there were mills on every creek. The early roads used by the Catawbans followed the ridgelines along river banks. Early drinking water all came from hand-dug wells, from about 1700 until 1830. Then four cisterns, one in each ward of the settlement, were built. These collected rainwater, used principally in fighting fires.

In 1882, Charlotte Water Works Company, a private business, erected a pump station on Briar Creek. Ten years later, the city bought it. In 1911, a severe drought hit the area, and the water dried up. Water had to be brought in on railroad cars, so the city then turned to the Catawba River for the first time. In 1912 one dam was erected, and water then came from the river.

During the 19th century, there was considerable agriculture, especially cotton crops, along the bottom lands near the Catawba. In the early 1800s, this meant loading the cotton on barges and transporting it to Charleston harbor. It was later in the century that the first railroads came.

To cross the river in earliest times, people used fords, where the water was shallow enough. Also private ferries started providing transport, and Rozzelle's ancestors operated one of the best known. (Rozzelle's Ferry Road is still on the map.) His grandfather was the last person to operate the ferry, which like others, was replaced by bridges. He was persuaded to sell the right to land for a bridge, with the provision that he would have toll-free use of it if he closed the ferry.

A favorite family tale is about the Battle at Rozzelle's Ferry in 1865 toward the end of the Civil War. Sherman's men were marching through the South, and after Columbia came toward Charlotte. The speaker's great-grandfather Lawson Rozzelle was delegated to go out on the bridge and toss as many planks as possible into the water. Thus, the Yankees found it impossible to cross the river, so they never entered the city of Charlotte.

In 1904, the first dam was erected at Lake Wylie. The next big story of that time was the Great Catawba River Flood of 1915. After two hurricanes hit the mountains, Charlotte received 22 inches of rain in 24 hours, washing away the bridge. Then came an explosion of dam building to control future floods. The biggest dam, Cowans Ford, was erected in 1963, creating Lake Norman.

What about water in Mecklenburg's future? In the past 20 years, Rozzelle said that the population of the county has almost doubled, and the amount of developed land has tripled. There has been a 70 percent decline in the treed and vegetation area and a 55 percent increase in water pollution, as 73 percent of the streams are polluted. Customers for water have doubled, and the amount of water withdrawn is up by 77 percent. The current drought conditions have dramatized the serious issues about our water.

Rozzelle said it is clear that we must increase both the quality and quantity of the water supply. Protecting water is a must.

Battle of Yorktown Database

by Patrice Alley

If your ancestor served in the militia at Yorktown, the National Park Service wants to know.

My ancestor, Benjamin Quinn, was in the Virginia militia at Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown, and his unit escorted the British prisoners of war to Winchester, Virginia, according to testimonies in his pension application. This sparked my interest and I toured the battlefield last fall. When I mentioned my ancestor's participation, I was put in touch with Park Ranger Diane Depew, who is assembling a database of all soldiers who were in the Battle of Yorktown. Official records exist for all Continental soldiers but not for state militia forces, she said. Anyone having an ancestor who served in the militia at Yorktown is encouraged to submit the name along with proper documentation. I submitted the pension application, and Benjamin Quinn is now properly listed in the official database of soldiers who served at this decisive battle in our nation's history. For information and instructions, Ranger Diane Depew can be reached at the following email address: Diane_K_Depew@nps.gov.

Renewal Time

by Lynn Bancroft

Remember that orange insert that came in your November Messenger? If you haven't already sent it back for renewal, now is the time! **Unless you renew, this is your last issue** and then you will be dropped from our rolls. Check the upper right corner of your mailing label to see when your membership expires. Life members do not need to renew. Don't miss out on a great deal for 2008!

Historical Sites Request

Gwen Cook, a Greenway Planner for Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation, is noting historical sites along Mecklenburg County creeks and streams where planned Greenway Trails will pass. If you know of a historical site that has public interest you can notify her at "Gwen (dot) Cook (at) mecklenburg county nc. Gov" or 704-432-1570. For example, she recently noted Colonel Thomas Sumter's Revolutionary War camp on Clems Branch where a future Greenway Trail is planned.

Upcoming Events

February 7, 2008 – “Positioning Yourself to Pass the Legacy Touch,” presented by Mary Anna Neal Bradley at The Belmont Center, 700 Parkwood Ave., Charlotte. The program will begin at 4:30p.m. Bradley, a social counselor and author, will lead a discussion that focuses on personal legacies and ways to ensure that good legacies are passed down to future generations.

February 17, 2008 – “Delicious Memories” with author Maureen Ryan Griffin. This will be held at the Monroe Library in Monroe, NC, 2:30-4:30pm. For more information or to register, please call 704/283-8184, ext. 224.

February 21, 2008 – “NC Live Resource: Heritage Quest.” This will be held at the Rowan Public Library in Salisbury, NC, from 1:30 – 3pm. For more information or to register, call 704-216-8228.

February 26, 2008 – “Genealogy/Census Records.” This will be held at the South Rowan Regional Library, in China Grove, NC. For more information or to register, call 704-216-7727.

March 15, 2008 – “Trading Paths and England’s Contact Era in North Carolina,” with Tom Magnuson. This will be held at the Monroe Library in Monroe, NC, at 10am. For more information or to register, please call 704/283-8184, ext. 224.

March 17, 2008 - “NC Live Resource: Heritage Quest.” This will be held at the Rowan Public Library in Salisbury, NC, from 7:00 – 8:30pm. For more information or to register, call 704-216-8228.

April 12, 2008 – “Ancestry Online for Beginners: Census Research.” This hands-on class will be held at the Monroe Library in Monroe, NC. Call 704/283-8184, ext. 224 to register and get more information.

April 18-20, 2008 – The Loch Norman Highland Games, Rural Hill, NC. Fun for the entire family, even if you’re not Scottish! Check out www.lochnormanhighlandgames.org for more information.

July 26, 2008, OMGS is cosponsoring an all-day workshop with the North Carolina Genealogical Society at Aldersgate. Plans are well under way. The speaker will be David Rencher, director of the Records and Information Division of the Family and History Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He also was director of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City for a number of years. You don’t want to miss this workshop!!!

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 to OMGS, P.O. Box 32453, Charlotte, NC, 28232-2453.

Joan Raney, Editor

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DATED MATERIAL INSIDE

OMGS Publications for Sale

<i>General Order Book, 11th "Bethel" Regt., NC Troops</i>	\$27.50 PPD
<i>Dr. J. B. Alexander's Medical Ledger & Account Book, 1855-1871</i>	\$16.50 PPD
<i>Real Estate and Legal Notices from Charlotte, NC Newspapers, 1835-1847</i>	\$27.50 PPD
<i>Real Estate and Legal Notices from Charlotte, NC Newspapers, 1848-1862</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>Mecklenburg County, NC Cemeteries, Volume 5: Elmwood Cemetery</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: 1983-2006</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>Minutes, 1774-1780</i>	\$16.50 PPD		
<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. Abstracts of Deed Books 24-28 & Books 1-3</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

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