

# Mecklenburg Messenger



Olde Mecklenburg Genealogical Society  
P.O. Box 32453  
Charlotte, NC 28232-2453  
Email: [omgs1775@yahoo.com](mailto:omgs1775@yahoo.com)  
Web page: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~ncomgs/>

September 2003

Joan Raney, Editor

## Directions to Aldersgate

Fellowship Hall, Aldersgate -- Ray Hall Community Center: Aldersgate asks that we use the main entrance and park in front of the Ray Hall Community Center, entering the building by the front door.

Coming from Eastway Dr., turn on Shamrock Dr. Instead of turning on Cole Drive, proceed out Shamrock to Aldersgate Main Entrance. You will pass these buildings on Shamrock Dr.: WNC Methodist Center, Museum of History, Asbury Care Center, and Wesley Nursing Center.

At the traffic light, turn right on Willard Farrow Dr. After the Welcome Center (like a gate house), drive 0.3 mi. on Willard Farrow Dr. After the Hezekiah Alexander House on the right, you will see 3 buildings facing a circle.

Ray Hall Community Center is the 2-story building in the middle, between Epworth Towers and Francis Residential Building.

Park in the visitor parking in front of the Community Center and enter by the front door.

## From the Board of Directors

by George Sutcliffe

The Board is happy to announce that our site for the OMGS 2003 Christmas Dinner Party will be in the Ray Hall Community Room at Aldersgate where we have our monthly meetings. The date is Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. We will gather at 6:30 pm for punch and appetizers. Dinner will be served buffet style at 7:00 pm. It will consist of a choice of two entrees, salad, three vegetables, rolls, dessert and beverages for \$11.00 per person all inclusive.

Reserve the evening of December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003 for our OMGS Annual Christmas Dinner Party. As

## OMGS Meetings

The September 2003 meeting of OMGS will be held on Wednesday, 10 September 2003 at the Fellowship Hall of Aldersgate, 3420 Shamrock Drive, Charlotte. *See first article for directions.* Social hour begins at 7p.m. with light refreshments and the meeting begins at 7:30p.m. Our speaker will be Mrs. Judy Gibson, Register of Deeds for Mecklenburg County, NC. She will talk to us about the Privacy Act and how it plays a role in our research. In October we will have James Sorrell back. He will be talking to us about maps. Sounds like a couple of great programs so hope to see you there!

The Hopewell Branch will meet on Saturday, 13 September 2003 at 10am, Hopewell Presbyterian Church. Our program will be on the DAR. Come out and join us.

always, guest tickets may be ordered with our own reservations and we welcome guests and Aldersgate residents. But please send your reservation and check in early. The reservations form will be included in next month's *Messenger*.

Come one! Come all! We look forward to an evening of good food with our friends and news about Olde Meck. We hope to see all of you there on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

## Notes from the August Meeting

by Mary Utting

Ann Williams, who spoke to Olde Mecklenburg Genealogical Society in August, is author of a book about a pioneer Mecklenburg family, the Torrances. Though these people are not her kin, her research and writing might inspire some who have gathered facts about their families to write their own histories.

Her book, *Your Affectionate Daughter, Isabella*, grew out of her work as a volunteer at the Hugh Torrance House and Store in Huntersville, N.C. She felt that there was much more to be learned about the characters she described to visitors, and at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte she found a wealth of information in the 15,000 Torrance family papers archived there.

The house and store are located near Cedar Grove, the handsome plantation house where James Torrance and his family, including daughter Isabella, lived. Though the book focuses on Isabella's story, the author increasingly found that James Torrance, a man of dynamic personality, dominated her tale. He was the son of Hugh, the first of the clan to come to North Carolina.

Isabella was the fourth child of James and his first wife, who died when the daughter was a baby. James was to marry twice more and father a total of 13. His second wife, a daughter of James Latta, a nearby plantation owner, soon died, so at age 7, Isabella was sent to Salem Female Academy, a boarding school.

At 17, she married, and at 18, off she went to Mississippi with her husband, a young baby, two of her brothers, and a group of slaves. There they started a plantation. Lucky for Ann Williams, the family saved much of the correspondence between Mississippi and North Carolina. All genealogists would be lucky to have such letters.

Mrs. Williams believes the group went to Mississippi because of the difficulty of getting their crops to market in Mecklenburg. The area did not have a railroad until the 1850s, but Coffeyville, MS, was near Memphis and the Mississippi River.

After six months in Mississippi, Isabella's husband died. To make matters worse, the plantation did not thrive thanks to a recession. Thus, she eventually returned to North Carolina and became the third wife of Rufus Reid.

Mrs. Williams wrote this book in narrative style, including dialogue. Although these were not the actual words the people spoke, the author believes she was able to write their true story, because she learned so much about them from their own documents, especially the letters.

She found additional sources of information at Duke University, and the late Dick Banks, who had donated the family papers to UNC, helped with the research.

She found that the family fortunes centered around cotton, the labor-intensive crop that led to the proliferation of slavery. Other crops such as sugar cane and rice, grown in other parts of the South, did not require such a large supply of cheap labor. The slaves (though that word was never used in the family writing) remain a presence in this story. At one point, when James Torrance hires an overseer, he gives instruction to the new employee, thus showing something of what life was like on an early 19<sup>th</sup> century plantation.

### **Hopewell District News**

by Tina Brown

The Hopewell Branch of the Olde Mecklenburg Genealogical Society will meet September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2003 at 10:00 AM. As usual we will meet in the Wayland Sunday School Room at the church.

The group has been on vacation for the Summer. I hope everyone has had a great time and will be with us to get the Fall schedule started.

Miriam Smith and Jean Lewis will be with us to present a program on the DAR. It sounds like a very informative way to spend a Saturday morning.

In October the Rev. Jeff Lowrance (his schedule permitting) will speak to us about his research on the roots of Hopewell Presbyterian Church. The church has acquired a Lily Grant for Jeff to do this research. His travels so far have taken him to Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. He also has dived into the local sources with his usual zeal.

Don't miss either program, they both sound like great fun.

### **Do You have High Blood Pressure and/or High Cholesterol?**

Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services and UNC-Charlotte are seeking individuals interested in participating in a research study of seniors with cardiovascular

disease who may benefit from nutrition counseling and/or diagnosis-specific meals.

All participants will receive 3 free health screenings and a series of gift certificates. Individuals may also receive nutrition counseling and/or home-delivered meals. Study-related services are available for qualified participants who:

- Are 60 years or older
- Have a diagnosis of High Blood Pressure and/or High Cholesterol
- Live in Mecklenburg County

For more information, please call the Recruitment Specialist at (704) 687-2317.

### **Founding Families of Mecklenburg**

Catawba Valley Scottish Society has invited descendants of early settlers of Mecklenburg County to become members of the Founding Families of Mecklenburg. This group will honor and perpetuate the memory of early pioneers who were living in Mecklenburg County before May 31, 1775.

To be eligible, a person must be able to prove each generation of his or her lineage back to an individual who settled in Mecklenburg County before May 31, 1775, the date of the adoption of the Mecklenburg Resolves. This document, which was published in several North Carolina newspapers, contained 20 amendments to the earlier Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. These amendments stated how the people would elect leaders and maintain law and order until Congress could authorize laws. Captain James Jack delivered this document to North Carolina delegates at the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

Although the Meck Deck, as it is familiarly known, remains in some doubt among historians, because a fire destroyed minutes of the May 19-20, 1775, meeting at which it was adopted, the newspaper records verify the authenticity of the Resolves.

Those whose heritage makes them eligible for the Founding Families recognition may request an application blank from Founding Families of Mecklenburg, Historic Rural Hill Farm, P. O. Box 1009, Huntersville, N. C. Please enclose a long, self-addressed, stamped envelope. Anyone whose application is verified will receive a specially designed lapel pin and a certificate suitable for framing.

### **Upcoming Events**

Appalachian Highland Games & Scottish Festival, Martins Creek, NC, September 6, 2003. For more information call (828) 837-5684 or email [ahginfo@webworkz.com](mailto:ahginfo@webworkz.com).

Charleston Highland Games & Scottish Gathering, Mount Pleasant, SC, September 19-21, 2003. For more information call (843) 529-1020 or email [info@charlestonscots.com](mailto:info@charlestonscots.com).

Flora Macdonald Highland Games, Red Springs, NC, October 3-5, 2003. For more information call (910) 843-5000 or email [cpal748@aol.com](mailto:cpal748@aol.com).

Scottish Society of the Waxhaws Gathering of the Clans, Waxhaw, NC, October 25, 2003. For more information, call (704) 764-5683, or email [webmaster@waxhaw.com](mailto:webmaster@waxhaw.com).

Foothills Highland Games, Hendersonville, NC, October 31-November 1, 2003. For more information, call (828) 859-2028, or email [patandivy@aol.com](mailto:patandivy@aol.com).

### **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.

Olde Mecklenburg Genealogical Society  
P.O. Box 32453  
Charlotte, NC 28232-2453

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
CHARLOTTE, NC  
Permit No.: 426

**DATED MATERIAL INSIDE**

**OMGS Publications for Sale**

<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>1850 Census Abstract, Mecklenburg County, NC</i>	<b>Sale!</b>	<del>\$27.50 PPD</del> \$17.50 PPD
<i>OMGS Surname Index, 2000 Edition</i>		<del>\$11.95 PPD</del> \$8.00 PPD
<i>Mecklenburg County, NC Waterways Map</i> (by William T. Skinner, C.S.R.S.)		\$3.50 PPD
<i>Nine Generation Ancestor Chart</i>		\$6.00 PPD (rolled) \$5.00 PPD (folded)
<i>OMGS Quarterlies: 1983-2002</i>	\$21.50 PPD (4/year)	\$8.50 PPD (single) \$2.00 PPD (index)

**Books by Herman W. Ferguson**

<i>Mecklenburg County, NC: Minutes of the Court of CP&amp;Q Sessions, Vol. I, 1780-1800</i>		\$30.00 PPD
<i>Mecklenburg County, NC: Minutes of the Court of CP&amp;Q Sessions, Vol. II, 1801-1820</i>		\$32.50 PPD
<i>Mecklenburg County, NC: Minutes of the Court of CP&amp;Q Sessions, Vol. III, 1821-1830</i>		\$27.50 PPD
<i>Mecklenburg County, NC: Minutes of the Court of CP&amp;Q Sessions, Vol. IV, 1831 - 1840</i>		\$25.00 PPD
<i>Mecklenburg County, NC: Minutes of the Court of CP&amp;Q Sessions, Vol. V, 1841 - 1850</i>	<b>New!</b>	\$27.50 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 &amp; 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

P.O. Box 32453

Charlotte, NC 28232-2453