

# Foundations

Dear Friends,

Thank you all for your support, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. We can always rely on our Matthews Historical Foundation members and their generosity with their time, talent, and financial contributions. We, the Matthews Historical Foundation board are looking forward to returning to a more normal way of life so we will be able to see our friends and members again. In the meantime, we appreciate all you have done in 2020 and we wish you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season.



Becky Hayes-Willard, President

## REID HOUSE ENHANCEMENTS

The upkeep and maintenance of the Reid House, built in 1890, is a major undertaking which can be quite expensive. The MHF Board relies upon donations and rental income to provide funding for this purpose. However, with Coronavirus and new competition by other venues, this vital source of funding is more difficult to generate.

The MHF Board felt that access for handicapped guests and an expanded outdoor entertainment area would enhance the Reid House. The Board has begun the development of a new deck and ramp at the rear of the house to provide handicapped access. In conjunction with the ramp and deck, a new brick patio and improvement of existing walkways and new walkways will accommodate handicapped needs. This new brick patio is designed to fit a standard 20 by 40 tent and will have electric and water service to accommodate caterers who are providing food for gatherings. This will provide an outside area for dining, meetings, parties, and wedding receptions while preserving the historic structure of the Reid House. The Board hopes to have the patio and new walkways completed by the spring.



If you wish to assist in the historical preservation of Matthews treasures, become a member of Matthews Historical Foundation or consider a donation to the Foundation. In addition to the Reid House the Foundation protects and cares for the Massey-Clark House, built in 1879. This structure houses the Matthews Heritage Museum, 232 North Trade Street.

Chuck Bennett, Board Member

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*From the Director's Desk:*

As we reopened the museum to the public in mid-September we started seeing a few guests. All have arrived with masks on, and are appreciative that we are one of the few museums that have resumed a normal schedule. Thankfully, many of the docents have also returned, though a few have had to drop out of our program. I am currently working with one young lady, Megan Stevens, who is finishing her graduate thesis in history at UNCC. She has started to train as a docent. Another young man of high school age, Muhammad Raza, is also interested in becoming a docent. He currently enjoys debate club, and I think he will be an interesting addition. I never imagined that with Covid-19 raging, anyone would be looking to become a docent! Kudos to them and good for us!



This fall the focus of my work continued to be working on the signage for the Heritage Trail in Tank Town. People in the neighborhood reviewed our draft of the signs and liked what had been done. We are moving forward trying to get the highest resolutions we can for the photographs and permission to use them. I think the signs as designed are very attractive and suspect you will be pleased with them as well. We will keep you updated on the project. The other two major projects still on my plate is the installation of the Tank Town exhibit at Town Hall and the publication of this newsletter. Wishing you and yours the happiest and safest of holidays.

Barbara E. Taylor, Director

***Pat Browning — Docent***

I grew up in Lynchburg, Va., the location of a summer home for Thomas Jefferson called Poplar Forest. Early on I knew I liked history; it was my favorite subject in high school. I graduated the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Va., then moved to Richmond, Va. I was surrounded by American history, but I did not seek to really know the local history then. After college, I worked in the corporate center for Thalhimers in Richmond, then worked for Belk Stores Services and Bank of America. There I was responsible for systems training. After 16 years at B of A, I retired and thought, what can I do now? I then started to volunteer at the Matthews Library and did that for several years.



One day in March 2017, I wandered into the Museum on a “free” Saturday. Here I met Erin Barrett and Barb Taylor, the director, and I was fascinated. Erin gave the best tour and I learned so much. I had lots of questions for Barb. She invited me to work at the 2017 Lawn Party. I got the chance to see inside the Reid House and learn its history. Barb later asked me to become a docent and I jumped at the chance. I started training in Sept. 2017 and I knew I was in the right place for me. This training gave me the chance to learn even more about Matthew’s history. Barb also asked me if I wanted to become a docent in the Reid house for the 2018 Lawn Party.

Last year 2019, I had the privilege of riding with Joe Brandenburg (dressed up as our Dr. T.N. Reid) in the Matthews Alive parade. We were driven in a shiny antique car through the town. I borrowed his wife, Mrs. Ellie Reid’s flowery hat, (thanks Barbara Stegall) and accompanied him playing Mrs. Reid. My Docent experience has enriched my life and provided new friendships.

*Our Thanks to Jeremy Riley*

In September, Becky Willard was contacted by a friend to see if the museum might have a project for a boy scout from Troop 140. I jumped at the chance to engage him to do landscaping around the museum from weed whacking the overgrown ivy, to pulling the weeds in the front beds and sidewalks around the museum, a tedious job. His final work was to spread much needed mulch, to refresh the beds. He came in the afternoon after school over a month's time. He did a terrific job and the museum looks better for it! !



Jeremy Riley

*A Sunny Saturday, A Blue Bike and a Quarter in My Pocket (2<sup>nd</sup> in series of 4)*

Stop 2: Railroad Tracks. You could tell how hot the day was by touching the rail with your index finger and counting “one thousand and one, one thousand and two,” and so forth. I never even made it to “one thousand and one” so Matthews was very hot in the summer. If the train was racing through the intersection when one approached the crosswalk, care had to be taken not to get too close to the tracks and not to stare at the train cars passing by. It was common knowledge that one could be hypnotized by the motion of the train and in that “train trance” the victim would unknowingly walk closer and closer to an untimely demise. If indeed the train was passing by, be ready to notice the last car called the caboose. Usually an engineer rode in this car and waved at the people waiting at the intersection. Occasionally, if children were near the tracks, the “train man” would throw out pieces of hard candy. The rule was you were to be nice, pick up the candy and wave “thanks”. But you never ate the candy. The “train man” was a stranger, after all.

Stop 3: Renfrow's. This was one of the places to go and to be seen. Saturday morning was always bustling with farmers getting supplies, home gardeners looking for seed and advice, kids getting ice cold bottled drinks out of the box, and the older gentlemen sitting around a cold pot bellied stove sharing the latest official and unofficial news around town.

Stop 4: Funderburk's Dry Goods (Now LAM Home and Studios) No Saturday would be complete without stopping in to see Cousin Louise, Mrs. Forbis, and Ms. Velma waiting on customers. The store had shelves on either side running the length filled with anything you could want. Bolts of cloth covered the long table running down the middle of the store. A customer would pick out her material and one of the ladies would measure the amount out using a wooden yardstick, cut it carefully, wrap it up in tissue, and ring it up on the brass cash register. There was much more there than cloth and sewing items. The stock also included, ready-made clothing, toys, women's lingerie packed in white boxes and tied with pink ribbons, jewelry, scarves, and handkerchiefs in the glass display cabinet at the front. Men's, women's and children's sneakers and leather shoes were stored near the back. Mickey Mouse and Davy Crockett watches were in their own special display cases. It was shopping at its finest! With a lunch time deadline to get home, one had to be wary of spending too much time in one place so, too soon, it was time to move on.

by Diane Adams, Foundation Member

*Foundations* is a publication of Matthews Historical Foundation and the Matthews Heritage Museum  
Edited by Barbara Taylor, Director

**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.**

**Visit our websites**

[www.matthewshistoricalfoundation.org](http://www.matthewshistoricalfoundation.org)  
[www.matthewsreidhouse.org](http://www.matthewsreidhouse.org)  
[www.matthewsheritagemuseum.org](http://www.matthewsheritagemuseum.org)

*Holiday Gift Ideas: Gifts from the Museum*

Give your friend or neighbor, aunt or son a gift of history this year! Are they native or a newcomer to Matthews? The Museum has several gifts that they might like! How about a cookbook filled with yummy recipes and interesting stories of folks from Matthews' earlier days. *Matthews Memories* is \$21.95. Or maybe they would prefer a DVD? *Matthews Remembered* is a look at life in the 1930s, 40s and 50s by early residents, and information about R. F. Outen Pottery for \$15. Give the gift of membership to the Foundation and Museum and receive a quarterly newsletter, tickets to visit the museum, and discounts to special events. *This is a gift to you and us!!* Levels are Individual/Family \$30, Patron \$100, or Sponsor \$250. Or maybe you would like a commemorative brick in the sidewalk in front of the museum for \$100. We have stocking stuffers of pick-up sticks (\$2.50) and Jacks (\$2) and wooden tops. We also have a frameable print of the Matthews School or a plaster model of it, that is paintable. Stop by and see what is available!

To buy a membership, go to [matthewshistoricalfoundation.org](http://matthewshistoricalfoundation.org) and pay with PayPal or credit card, or you can send a check to Matthews Historical Foundation, PO Box 1117, Matthews, NC 28016.

*Introducing Bob Aycock.... Board Member*



Bob Aycock has been a Board Member of the Matthews Historical Foundation since 2018. In 2019, the Board voted for Bob to serve as 2nd Vice President. Bob's passion for his beloved hometown and preserving its rich history led him to the Foundation. He has also been a member of the Matthews Historic Preservation Advisory Committee since 2017.

Bob is a native Charlottean and has lived in Matthews since the 80s when his family moved from Charlotte to Matthews. Bob attended Matthews Elementary, Randolph Middle, and East Mecklenburg High before leaving Matthews for college at UNC Wilmington. He met his wife, Jen, at UNCW and the two graduated in 2004. Bob proposed to Jen in the gazebo in front of Town Hall on Christmas night in 2004. The two were married in 2006 and now enjoy raising their four children—Robert, William, Elisabeth, and Gretchen—in the Town of Matthews.

After teaching in CMS for three years, Bob found his way into the world of marketing. He now has over 10 years of online marketing experience, working for agencies in NC and FL, remotely. Bob has been with Florida-based BrandStar since 2015, in various social media and account management roles. His passion for and knowledge of social media marketing has led him to assist the Foundation with their social media profiles and websites. He has also assisted the Matthews Woman's Club with their website.

When Bob isn't home celebrating the holidays with his family—he LOVES Christmas—you can find him around Matthews, drinking a Lavender Latte from Brakeman's, or buying plants and chicken feed from Renfrow Hardware. The Aycocks love gardening, being outside with their dogs and chickens.