



On Your MARC

MUSEUM & ARCHIVES OF ROCKINGHAM COUNTY



MADISON BICENTENNIAL EDITION

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2nd Quarter
Visitor Count:

356

Soirée to be a celebration of "Going Places"

Visitors to the MARC surely agree that the museum is "going places." It is no longer the modest (though ambitious) dream of the dedicated members of the Rockingham County Historical Society who secured the old courthouse and assembled exhibits for a local audience that even caught the eye of the Smithsonian Institution. The vision from the beginning was impressive, and with new projects, acquisitions, and programs the vision continues to grow more inspiring.

How apt that the theme for this year's soirée is "Going Places." One of MARC's recent acquisitions, a 1916 Model T Ford, is a wonderful visual symbol. Carrying the message one step further, two cars—from two different eras—will be on display, an early model vintage car and a Tesla Model 3 to symbolize our dreams for the future.

The event on August 11 coincides with the sixth anniversary of the museum's opening day. The custom of rotating our location throughout the county brings the soirée back to Deep Springs Country Club in Stoneville. This lovely setting adds to the excitement and festivity, but nevertheless allows for more casual attire. Summer in the South is not the time for neckties and stockings!

The silent auction begins the friendly competition for interesting items and special experiences. The live auction will include an original painting by renowned artist Mel Steele, donated by his wife, D. J. Ballington. There are other special items and grand adventures that will entice bidders and provide much needed support for MARC.

Seating is limited and we always sell out, so the time is now to gather some friends for a table or reserve your table and invite friends to join you. Each ticket costs \$60 which includes dinner. Six, eight and ten person tables are available. The soirée is the museum's major fundraiser, and for all who attend is a memorable evening.

--- By Tilda Balsley and Bill Horsley, Event Chairs

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 Follow us on Facebook: Museum & Archives of Rockingham County

5th Annual MARC
Summer Soirée
Saturday, August

From our Director, Jordan Rossi



Board of Directors map MARC's future

The sixth anniversary of the museum's opening coincides with our Summer Soirée on August 11. Because the MARC is young with many diverse aspects, there are so many exciting opportunities to develop and expand. Without a doubt, there are no limitations on the places we can go with the continued support of our donors, staff, directors, volunteers, and members. To prepare us for this journey, the MARC Board of Directors held a Saturday retreat in March, under the experienced leadership of Dr. Ann Brady, chair of the Governance Committee

To start the day, directors enjoyed a behind-the-scenes tour of the MARC museum to give everyone an opportunity to visualize our accomplishments and our challenges. Afterwards, MARC president Jeff Bullins led a discussion about the status of MARC, including the strengths and weaknesses. (If you ask me, one of our strengths is our wonderful Board of Directors, whose enthusiasm and thoughtfulness inspire optimism. One of the weaknesses that repeatedly came up in discussion is that many people still don't know we exist!)

After lunch, we turned our thoughts to the future. As we worked in group activities, Ann led us to define our visions for the future. Since then, she has compiled these ideas, and, with the help of

the Executive Committee, crafted a new strategic plan. The Board of Directors approved this plan at their June meeting to act as the organization's road map for the next three years.



For a "small" museum, the MARC is a surprisingly complex organization. We own, and are responsible for the preservation and interpretation of three historic properties: the 1816 Wright Tavern, High Rock Ford (20 acres improved with trails and a river access), and the Troublesome Creek Iron Works (50 acres unimproved property). These historic sites and Wright Tavern were inherited from the Rockingham County Historical Society, our predecessor. Most recently, our attention has been focused on running the museum, located in the 1907 Courthouse in Wentworth, which we lease from Rockingham County.

Our mission, stated simply, is to preserve and share Rockingham County's history for present and future generations. Our revised strategic plan reinforces this mission and provides a route to follow for success. What an exciting journey is ahead for us all, and, more importantly, for the MARC!

Volunteers are the key to our success

New volunteer creates fresh look for MARC publications

Have you noticed the interesting appeal of our most recent event flyers? Sharon Tongbua is their creator, and we gratefully welcome her as a new volunteer and member of the Publicity Committee!

Sharon earned her degree in Commercial Art and Advertising Design from Guilford Technical Community College. She worked almost thirty years at Morehead Memorial Hospital, serving as Assistant Director of Marketing/Graphic Designer at the end of her career in 2014. Her work for the hospital, as well as freelance work in the community, earned her awards and recognition in the graphic arts industry. "Sharon brings to MARC a degree of professional service far greater than MARC could afford to hire. I'm excited to have the opportunity to work with her to improve the newsletter and all of MARC's media presence," says Jean Bullins, Publicity Committee chair. In addition to her graphic arts skills, Sharon also provides excellent insight into event planning, community outreach, and networking--all aspects of her former career and areas of need for MARC.



Since her retirement, Sharon has chosen to work part-time as Office Administrator at Leaksville United Methodist Church. She has been a member of the Eden Lions Club for 14 years, and served on Eden City and Chamber of Commerce boards. Although she is a Rockingham County native, her last name, Tongbua, is not common to this area. In fact, Sharon's husband of 45 years, Somchai, is from Thailand. They have two sons, one in New Hampshire and one in northern Virginia. Being their mom and grandmother to their four children fills Sharon's heart with love.

"I am pleased to join the MARC family of volunteers," Sharon said. "I have always enjoyed museums and learning about and preserving the past. I am glad I have a talent that can help the MARC."

PICKIN' AT THE MARC

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pickinatthemarc@gmail.com

FIDDLERS CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 10, 2018
12 P.M.



COMPETITION CATEGORIES

Bluegrass Band	Old Time Band
Youth Vocal	Youth Instrument
Bluegrass Fiddle	Old Time Fiddler
Bluegrass Banjo	Old Time Banjo
Guitar	Open/Variety
Mandolin	Vocal

Up to \$2,500 in Prizes!

Madison's Bicentennial



Remembering Madison's Fire of 1948

By Jerri B. Waldruff

I immediately realized something was terribly wrong when my eyes popped open in the early morning hours on Sunday, June 20, 1948. My two sisters and I found ourselves alone in our upstairs rooms in the Grogan House apartments located on east Hunter Street in Madison. When I realized I smelled smoke, I grabbed my sisters and flew down the stairs. It appeared the entire town was on fire!

My mother was in the yard waiting for her father to come with his truck and move us to safety. Daddy, an owner of *The Messenger*, the local newspaper, was on the job downtown taking pictures. All we could do was stand in the yard and watch in horror as fire engulfed the downtown block nearby our home.

Travis Queen, driver of a northbound Greyhound bus first saw the flames around 4:30 a.m. at Meador No. 2 Store on Market Street. He stopped the bus and sent in an alarm. Fire trucks responded from seven towns, Madison, Mayodan, Stoneville, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, Reidsville, and Leaksville, to fight the worst fire in our town's history.



Crowds of people came to witness the downtown disaster. (Left) Firefighters protect the south side of East Murphey Street to slow the fire's spread down the block. (Right) This building is a portion of the car dealership.



Photo credits: Jerri Waldruff Collection

People living on our block, in the path of the growing conflagration, became alarmed and removed personal belongings from their residences. Businesses on both Market Street and Murphey Street were totally destroyed. According to newspaper accounts, "The wonder is that it (*the fire*) was checked at all and that the entire block in both directions wasn't wiped out." The cause of the fire was never determined, and fortunately there were no serious injuries associated with the event.

On Market Street, Grogan Chevrolet Co. sustained the most damage. Owners H. J. Grogan and Thomas Tuttle began work immediately to rebuild with a goal of reopening "before the tobacco market opened in September." The T.D. Meador Grocery Co. lost both of its downtown stores and expected replacement costs

(Continued on page 5)

Madison's Bicentennial



Remembering Madison's Fire of 1948

(Continued from page 4)



(Left) The façade of the Grogan Chevrolet Co. is in the center of the photo. (Right) The back portion of that property was the sight directly behind the author's residence. In later years, Tuttle Chevrolet Co., Peoples' Bank, and a mini-mall occupied the replacement building. Readers may recall the drive-thru area and parking lot inside the center of the building.



to be \$75,000 to \$100,000. Penn and Mable Vaughn expected insurance coverage to replace the losses sustained in their meat market. The Ideal Pool Room was a total loss with little insurance. Dewey Hawkins planned to rebuild his Food Center, even though he reported his "insurance men weren't offering him much." Mack's dime store was protected by a fire wall on one side, however, smoke caused building damage and loss of merchandise. Businesses on Murphey Street, Brown-McFalls Drug Co., the Mother and Daughter Beauty Shoppe, and Hagler's Department store suffered mostly smoke and water damage.

See page 8 to learn more
about the author,
Jerri Brown Waldruff

References:

Damage caused by fire estimated at \$400,000. (1948, June 24). *The Messenger*, Pg. 1
Madison firemen plan to reorganize dept. (1948, September 2). *The Messenger*, Pg. 1
Fire department granted equipment. (1948, September 9). *The Messenger*.
Fire department holds successful practice drill. (1948, October 28). *The Messenger*.
Schultz given go-ahead on fire department requirements. (1949, January 13). *The Messenger*.

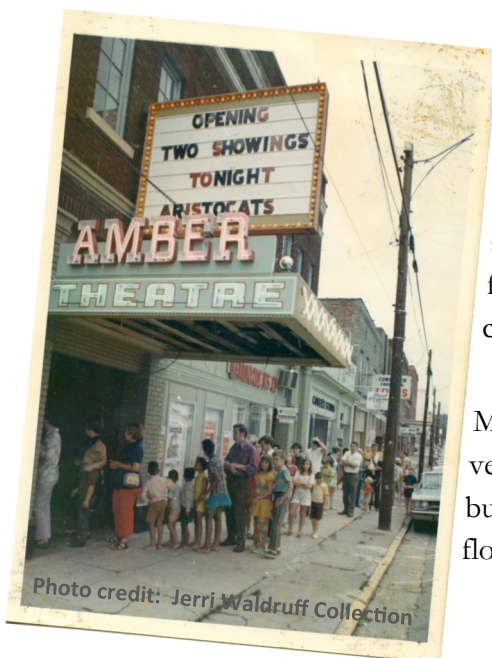
Madison's Bicentennial

Movie theaters in Madison

By Jerri B. Waldruff



Madison's Piedmont Theater was located on the north side of West Murphey Street, in the present-day location of Berger Law Office. According to the *News and Record* (1 September, 1924), "A tragedy of major proportions was narrowly averted...when a film caught fire in the theater's projection room, causing the audience to panic and stampede the exits." Tom Taylor Brown was the operator of the projector.



"Screaming women and children charged toward the front door but had to back off because of the fire. Some patrons surged toward a rear exit while others found their way out through a side window. Those going out the rear exit had a watery surprise waiting for them. The door opened onto a steep, weed-covered hill at the bottom of which was a small stream of water... Fortunately there were no injuries...the Madison fire department reached the theater and brought the fire quickly under control." Presumably, the theater closed during the following year.

In February 1925, excavation began on a two-story building on East Murphey Street, a half block west of the Town Clock. Partners in this venture were Dr. J. T. Taylor, Dr. Paul Fetzer, and V. H. Idol. The building design included two store fronts and a movie theater on the first floor. Medical offices for the two doctors, including a laboratory and operating rooms, were planned for the upstairs. The cost of construction was \$12,000.

The theater had a seating capacity of 500, including seats in a balcony for African-American patrons. It was built with the screen at the front of the building and the floor sloping upwards because a giant rock at the rear of the lot could not be blasted.

The developers held a contest to select a name for the theater. Miss Tobe Moore made the prize winning suggestion by taking the first two letters in each of the owners names, PA (Paul Fetzer), TO (Tom Taylor), and VI (Vic Idol), to create the name Patovi.

The Patovi opened in late October of 1925, with an overflowing crowd of 750 in attendance. Admission cost 9 cents for those under age 16 and 25 cents for adults. The building also served as the location for the graduation ceremonies of Madison High School for the years 1926 through 1929. The Patovi operated until the 1970's when it was sold, and then operated for a few years as the Amber Theater. Eventually, the business closed and the building was demolished.



References:

Scism, J. (1999, September 1). Remember When: 75 years ago. *News and Record*.
 Scism, J. (2000, October 22). Remember When: 75 years ago. *News and Record*. p. R5.
 Scism, J. (2000, February 2). Remember When: 75 years ago. *News and Record*.

MARC Business

Comer's Photography is Soirée fund-a-need selection

When MARC opened in 2012, Madison photographer Henry Lee “Pete” Comer donated his beloved business equipment to MARC to ensure it would be valued and preserved. After his death in 2015, his family also entrusted the MARC with his vast collection of work — negatives and photographs from the fifty-four years he and his wife, Jackie, operated Madison’s preeminent photography shop, Comers Studio. His work chronicles the lives of generations of families in Rockingham and surrounding counties.

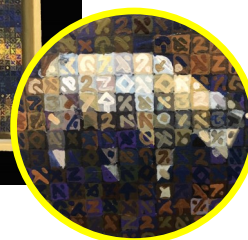
It took multiple trips with trucks and trailers to deliver the Comer Collection to the MARC. *(Photo right: Bob Carter on moving day.)* Jackie had maintained an excellent system of organizing the work for each customer. However, the science of archival materials has changed greatly over the years. The paper envelopes and cardboard boxes the Comers used for filing endanger the life span of the contents. And, because of the volume of the collection, research is needed to determine the best practices for archiving, filing, and sharing it.

As stewards of this collection, the MARC is asking members and friends to dig a little deeper in their wallets to make an extra donation to the Soirée fund-a-need campaign. Proceeds of the drive will be dedicated to the preservation of this valuable history and to the advancement of our ultimate goal to make the collection available to families and researchers. As you plan for the evening of the Soirée, please consider how you can contribute to this cause.



This intricate original painting, *The Flock*, by Mel Steele, is one of the premier prizes to be auctioned at the Soirée.

Donated by D.J. Ballington, Steele’s wife and a dedicated MARC volunteer, the acrylic work in a rustic blonde wood frame measures 20” x 34.” Its approximate value in the art market is \$3000.



This piece is one of several pixilated works Steele has completed. The entire work is painted in individual blocks, each with detailed colors and characters, as viewed in the inset.

Recent Events

Everyone has at least one photo like these!
Won't you share yours with the MARC?



Photo credits: Jeff Bullins



To illustrate our Soirée theme, "Going Places," we are requesting members to email photos to MARC depicting you posing with your favorite car. Please remember to provide the names of people in the picture and the make and model of the car. (Left) MARC president Jeff Bullins purchased this 1935 Chevrolet while in high school (in the 1970's). Peggy & Gil McKee's first car was this 1929 Model A Ford.

Introducing our feature writer

We are grateful to Jerri Brown Waldruff for her contributions to this newsletter (pp. 4-6). Although she lived in other states for much of her adult life, she has been a leading researcher and collector of all things Madison for many years. In 2005 she published a book, *Bits and Pieces of Madison History*, in which she shared copies of her notes, pictures, and memorabilia. A Bicentennial edition of the book will be available at the Mad Bean coffee house in Madison for \$10.

Jerri is a past president of the Rockingham County Historical Society and the James Hunter Chapter, NSDAR, as well as a past chair of the Madison Historic Properties Commission. She is married to Rev. Harold Waldruff. Jerri has a son in Florida and one in Tennessee, in addition to four step-children.

Please join me in thanking Jerri for preserving and sharing Madison's history with us.



Photo credits: Jeff Bullins

Our second quarter programs were very successful. We appreciate Bob Carter's May program about cars and roads and Col. Mark Richardson (above) and Ed Bullard's Flag Day commemoration. Thanks also to Valencia Abbot for leading the June Roundtable discussion.

Coming Events

Summer events sizzle at MARC

July's Genealogy Roundtable:

"Christmas in July"

Led by Peggy Burton

Thursday, July 26



Making discoveries in genealogical research is fulfilling, but ensuring the lasting value of that work is priceless. Peggy Burton has spent a lifetime gathering facts, heirlooms, letters, and stories of ancestors. For the past ten years she has created personal and unique Christmas gifts for her children and grandchildren to pass down the fruits of her labors, which she will explain.

Bring a bagged lunch, if you choose, and join us at the MARC for this discussion. Remember, Christmas is only 5 months away!

Second Madison Freetown Seminar Scheduled for August

The second annual Madison Freetown Seminar will be held at the Madison-Mayodan Public Library on **August 18 from 1:30 to 4:00 pm**. Freetown was the African-American community in the area overlapping the shared borders of Madison and Mayodan. Since last year's event, more interesting stories about the area and its residents have surfaced.

We are hoping to discover rare photographs and memorabilia portraying life in Freetown. Arrangements are being made to record oral histories and scan photographs. Photos that illustrate family histories are also welcome. Please let us know in advance what you plan to share.

For more information, please contact Fletcher Dalton at 336-932-3521. See you at the seminar!

July program features music and history

MARC members and friends are in for a treat at our July program. We look forward to Wayne Seymour, Fred Reynolds and Taylor Rorrer's presentation, "Music and the Mills." All talented musicians who are active in various forms of traditional music, the men will share the history of mill songs through performance and discussion.

Mill music reflected many influences, and sometimes conditions in the mills themselves. This program will examine the influence of mill music on the development of American music, as well as the cross cultural exchanges between rural and town traditions.

Please join us
Thursday, July 19

Refreshments
6:30 p.m.

Program
7:00 p.m.

Museum & Archives of Rockingham County Board of Directors

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Editor & Design: Jean Bullins
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Tilda Balsley
Libby Barrett
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Fletcher Dalton
Jane Haines
Jordan Rossi
Sharon Tongbua

MARC your calendar

Thursday, July 19 — 7:00 p.m.

Discussion/demonstration: "Music and the Mills"
Featuring Wayne Seymour, Fred Reynolds, and Taylor Rorrer

Thursday, July 26 — 12:00 noon

Genealogy Roundtable: "Christmas in July"
Peggy Burton, Presenter
Bring a bag lunch, if desired.

Saturday, August 11

Summer Soirée Annual Fundraiser
at Deep Springs Country Club, Stoneville

Saturday, August 18 — 1:30-4:00 p.m.

Madison Freetown Seminar
at the Madison-Mayodan Public Library

Sunday, September 16 — 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Constitution Day event at MARC

Friday, September 21 — 3:00 p.m.

High Rock Ford Park Ribbon Cutting
(Rain date: Friday, September 28)

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, November 10

4th Annual MARC Fiddlers' Convention

Watch our website for registration information

MARC Hours of Operation

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday	1 pm - 6 pm
Saturday	10 am - 4 pm

Museum Admission

Adult	\$5.00
Seniors & Students	\$3.50
Children	\$2.50
Children under 4 years	FREE
Family pass	\$15.00
Members	FREE

Visit www.themarconline.org for individual and business membership information and forms.

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