



# On Your MARC

MUSEUM & ARCHIVES OF ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Special Event	1
Director's Letter	2
Volunteer Focus	3
Feature Article	4
Exhibits & Artifacts	5
Mr. History	6
MARC Business	7
Research Tips	8
Recent Events	9
General Information	10

2nd Quarter  
Visitor Count  
492

## 2016 SUMMER SOIRÉE *Annual fundraiser celebrates "the sweet life"*

This year's annual *Summer Soirée* is themed "La Dolce Vita," and the affair will indeed represent "the sweet life." The festivities begin at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 13, at Deep Springs Country Club in Stoneville. Event tickets are \$50 each. An evening among friends, a strolling violinist, and an enticing Italian dinner menu will fill the senses with pleasure and plenty. Complimentary beer and wine will be provided while guests peruse exciting items offered in both the silent and live auctions. The *soirée* is MARC's premiere fundraising event.



*Mel Steele's original painting to be auctioned.*

In support of MARC, local artist Mel Steele has painted a rustic, Italian-themed still life oil painting especially for this event. The original will be offered for sale through a blind bidding, with the highest offer taking home this beautiful work of art. The painting is featured on this year's event program as well as the event tickets.

An exciting addition to this year's program is the "Golden Ticket." Only 100 Golden Tickets will be sold at \$100 each. Just prior to the live auction, there will be a drawing and the holder of the winning Golden Ticket will select their prize from among all of the live auction items.

This year marks the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of historic Wright Tavern. The Tavern, one of Rockingham County's oldest surviving buildings still in use, is in need of further repairs and restoration. There will be a special appeal for funds to restore this historic and cultural landmark for future generations to appreciate.

Event and Golden Tickets are available from MARC Board members, at the MARC (located in the historic 1907 courthouse in Wentworth), online at [www.themarconline.org](http://www.themarconline.org) or may be ordered by telephone at 336-634-4949.

P.O. Box 84, Wentworth, NC 27375 (336) 634-4949  
[MARCconnection@gmail.com](mailto:MARCconnection@gmail.com) [www.themarconline.org](http://www.themarconline.org)  
 Physical Address: 1086 NC HWY 65, Reidsville, NC 27320  
 Follow us on Facebook: Museum & Archives of Rockingham County

## *From our Director, Jordan Rossi*



The power and productivity of volunteers astound me. So many of the MARC's projects rely on their efforts. Take the library; if you'd walked in there six months ago, you may have stubbed your toe on cardboard boxes or tripped over a knee-high stack of Civil War books. If you made it to one of the tables, you'd have found it difficult to work without relocating somebody's notes or reference materials. The library was a glorious mess indicative of the important research that happens there.



Bob Carter works in the recently reorganized MARC library.

Photo credit: J. Rossi

In previous years, brave individuals undertook the task of organizing the library, labeling books and shelves, and creating systems of classification. Yet, as time elapsed the number of tomes increased and entropy took hold. Into this place of mild chaos stepped three wonderful volunteers. Working with Bob Carter and Fletcher Waynick, they returned week after week to ensure every book was shelved in its place. They asked questions, sorted, and listed. Fletcher installed additional bookshelves for them. And when they were finished, the floors and tables were clear! There was so much space to work and meet and research! So, thank you Deuard Johnstone, Debbie Comer, and Sandra Dickens for making the library functional and accessible for visitors and staff alike.

And, thank you to *all* our volunteers. Your efforts enable us to do our jobs and fulfill our mission efficiently and effectively. Volunteers truly leave their mark in so many ways! Just in the past week:

- Staff enjoyed fresh produce grown by volunteer Marcia Jones in the Wright Tavern garden.
- Volunteer Sheila Tilley and Treasurer Kay Hammock briefed me on accounting and tax matters, which they manage expertly for MARC.
- The Resource Development committee worked diligently to organize our annual Summer Soirée, themed La Dolce Vita.
- Ginger Waynick initiated the MARC's radio show, which she graciously offered to organize and host.
- Mary Barrett brought together friends to help with research for the Korean War Exhibit.
- Volunteer Hazel Puckett and Administrative Assistant Debbie Brown reorganized the gift shop.
- Volunteer Valencia Abbott created a project for her Aspire Summer Program students which will also benefit the MARC.
- And last, but not least, Jean Bullins arranged and edited this wonderful newsletter!



Ginger Waynick and Jeff Bullins record a "Community Accents" program for WMYN/WLOE Radio.

Photo credit: F. Waynick

All this in only a week. Imagine what volunteers accomplish for the museum over a whole year, as receptionists and docents, curators and collections managers, program planners and advisors, and so much more. Volunteers are our friends and advocates. We are so grateful for all our volunteers, whose contributions are immeasurable and invaluable.

## *Volunteers make it happen!*

### *Celebrating a long history of service*

The March Board of Directors meeting was something of a milestone for MARC and for Dr. Lindley Butler. We would be remiss if we did not take this time to look back at his contributions to our organization and to the people of Rockingham County. Lindley served on the Historical Society Board of Directors for 30 years, between 1968 and 2004 (with two breaks in service during that time). His leadership as chair of the steering committee in 2008-2009 and followed by his service as chair of the Rockingham County Museum and Archives in 2009-2010 was instrumental to the organization's successful transition and the creation of the MARC. Lindley's term on the MARC Board of Directors continued through March of 2016 when he reached his term limit, as specified in our by-laws.

Through the years, Lindley has served this organization in many other capacities including: vice-president in the 1970's; chair of a structural reorganization of the Historical Society in 1975; director of the Wright Tavern restoration for about 15 years; founding editor of the Historical Society *Journal* 1976-1984; founding editor of the newsletter in 1975; and Wright Tavern archaeology director in 1984 and 1987 to 1997. He has authored two histories of Rockingham County, a Wright Tavern booklet, and numerous articles about the county's history.

Perhaps his greatest contribution to the preservation of Rockingham County history was engaging students from his history and archaeology courses at RCC, including Rockingham County History classes, throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The Historical Society has benefitted directly from the scope and leadership those students have continued to provide in research and preservation efforts.

Even though Lindley is not a Board member at this time, he remains active in the work of the organization. He serves as chair of the historic properties committee and provides valuable assistance with archaeology work, museum exhibits, and publications.

We are thankful for Dr. Butler's lifetime of devotion to this county's history and appreciative of his guidance and leadership.

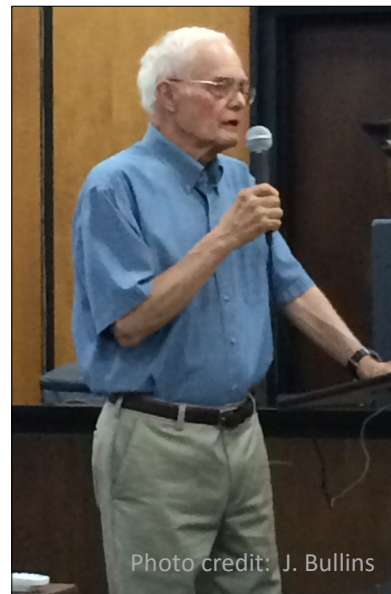


Photo credit: J. Bullins

Dr. Butler shares his experiences and knowledge of the Blackbeard Revenge salvage project during a MARC Dinner & History event.

### **You can help MARC!**



"Like" and "Share" **Museum and Archives of Rockingham County** on Facebook. Great things are happening here. See and share the good news!



## *Feature Article*

### **Local business holds historic distinction**

Reidsville Grocery Company's sprawling warehouse on Freeway Drive doesn't look like a slice of history, but as the oldest wholesale grocery distributor in North Carolina, it has a story to tell. For more than a century the Balsley family has run the business. Peyton Balsley follows his grandfather, father, and brother, serving as the current president. Siblings, wives and cousins have worked there as well.

Across town, the East Market Street building which served the business for the first 100 years or so, still bears the name painted boldly across the front. Its proximity to the train tracks was a must in those days for receiving the cases ordered from as far away as New York. Horse-drawn buggies pulled up to the wide warehouse doors for loading.

Inside the old building, now owned by another company, the hardwood floors and heavy wooden beams are reminders of

another time. Steep stairs lead to the third floor and to the basement where the cool air made storage of hoop cheese and fat back ideal. The remnant of a hand operated elevator that brought goods up to the main floor is still there. Cases on the third floor were sent down on a conveyer belt. Riding down the belt was a treat that several generations of Balsley children enjoyed on visits there.

Though customer service remains a priority, the company has continued to evolve. The move to Freeway Drive allowed for expanded operations. But the biggest indicator of passing time is their inventory. They no longer have stove pipe, roofing supplies or kegs of salt fish. Today, the wholesale company sells a large variety of convenience foods and tries to stay ahead of market trends. "When we first stocked bottled water in the 1980's, I wondered who would buy something they could get for free," said Skip Balsley, previous president. The company now sells about 2,000 cases of bottled water a week.

In the lobby of Reidsville Grocery, pictures remind customers and employees of the old days. A glass case displays a sampling of obsolete grocery items like Miss Curtis Snowflake Marshmallow Crème, Aeromist Glass Cleaner, Gold Dust Scouring Cleaner, and Beeman's B-G-O Ointment. Scrapbook pages show candy invoices from 1935 when 64 cents could buy a box of two dozen Peter Paul Mounds. This little showcase reflects changes, not just in this family's grocery business, but also in everyday American life.

By Tilda Balsley, MARC President



## News from the Galleries

### WANTED

#### Tobacco relics

One of the most popular exhibits at MARC is the tobacco barn. It is a natural place to display objects related to the growing, marketing, and manufacturing of tobacco in Rockingham County.

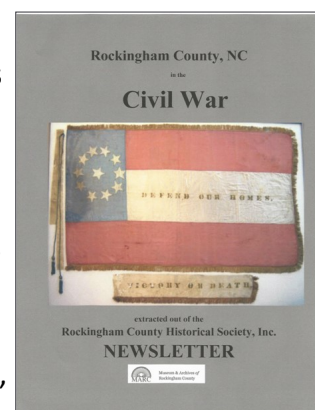
In the MARC archives, we need to maintain a special collection of tobacco data including brand names and advertising objects, lists, and pictures of the individual plantation tobacco factories, relics connected to tobacco auctioneering, names of buyers and auctioneers, plug tobacco pouches and snuff boxes, and any other items related to the industry or the use of tobacco. It would also be interesting to preserve stenciling of tobacco brand names from the walls of barns or tobacco factory offices.

Please contact MARC if you can help with the preservation of our agricultural heritage.

By Charlie Rodenbough

### MARC offers new Civil War publication

Since the founding of our organization as the Historical Society, a primary goal has been to preserve the history of this county. Over the years, our members have conducted interviews, researched source documents, and published valuable historical accounts in the Rockingham County Historical Society, Inc. Newsletter.



We are now able to organize and compile all of those works by subject matter into single books. The first such book, *Rockingham County, NC in the Civil War*, is now available for pre-order. The price per copy is \$15. Call the MARC at 336-634-4949 to place your order!

### Group offers matching funds for Mayodan Exhibit

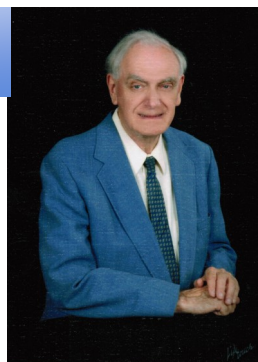
The Mayodan Preservation League has operated for over 20 years to fulfill their purpose to promote the heritage and history of the Town of Mayodan. Their pledge to match up to \$2,500 in public donations towards the creation of a Mayodan exhibit at the MARC will ensure their efforts continue well into the future. This pledge effectively doubles the value of donations given by individuals. Donations for this grant from the Preservation League should be mailed to MARC with the purpose noted with the payment.

The MARC archives is already home to a significant collection of Mayodan photographs and artifacts from the Jeffrey Bullins collection. These will serve as the basis of the initial exhibit. This exhibit will serve as the catalyst and model for future MARC exhibits representing all of the county's municipalities.



## Mr. History: Bob Carter, County Historian

**Question:** My name is Ben Marsh. I am restoring a World War Two airplane that was sold as surplus to a Reidsville based company called Falcon Airways, around 1947-1948. I am researching both the military and civil history of the airplane, so I am in hope of learning something of Falcon Airways. Can you tell me anything about the company and what became of it? Of particular interest is if you've any photographs associated with Falcon Airways.



### Answering your question: Falcon Airways

The Reidsville Municipal Airport was built in 1944 with three runways and two hangers constructed about the same time. On 1 July 1945 the airport was leased to Falcon Airways with John Hopkins as manager. The Falcon Company was not incorporated until 25 March 1948. The company had capital stock holders being Robert S. Hopkins (brother of John), Claude P. Smith, and Cecila Pennington. The company was incorporated under the name Falcon Racers. For some reason the incorporation was suspended on 15 December 1949 by Thad Eure, the Secretary of State for North Carolina.



Photo from the Reidsville Airport, 1945.  
Shared by Bob Carter

An ad in the Reidsville City Directory for 1948-1949 says: "Falcon Airways, Piper Cubs, Fairchild, Stinson and Aerocoupe Aircraft, sales and service. Also flight instructions, passenger rides, charter trips anytime – anywhere. Phone number 4, municipal airport. Burlington Road."

W. L. Leferer seems to have been the main instructor. He was very active in airplane racing and placed in the top ten in a number of races. It appears that a small airplane known as the "Falcon Special" was used in these races around the country. Some people called the plane "The Flying Feen." A rumor says that Leferer was later killed in an airplane accident in or near Dayton, Ohio.

A friend once told me that a Reidsville physician, Dr. William S. Hester, purchased a WWII airplane with two engines and that he and Dr. Hester flew to eastern North Carolina. He said he was glad to return to Reidsville safely but never rode in the plane again. In 1948 there were 17 airplanes at the airport and most were privately owned.

It was soon clear that the airport would not be financially successful, but some private planes continued to use the airport until the 1950s or 1960s. During this time the airport was sold to the Citizen's Development Association of Reidsville for the sum of \$45,000. This group sold the land for industrial development. I think a trucking company once used the buildings. Two of the old hangers are still standing and might be in use by a local company.

Note: Since the above was written, I found an ad dated September 1950 indicating that the American Aviation Services, the successors to Falcon Airways, was opened at the Reidsville Municipal Airport under the owner-operator of K. C. Benbow. I don't think he was in business very long.



**Check the MARC website to see photos and read more about the airport, this restoration project and Ben Marsh. If you have scrapbooks, photos, or other information about this plane or Falcon Airlines, please contact MARC!**

## MARC Business

### Support MARC by shopping AmazonSmile

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support MARC every time you shop on Amazon—at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same prices, selection, and shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to MARC!

- To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may want to add a bookmark to make it easy to start your shopping at AmazonSmile each time you shop.
- Tens of millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages.
- You use the same account for Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.



To select MARC as your charity to support, log in to your Amazon account through [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). Search their database and select **Rockingham County Historical Society Museum and Archives**.

More information on the program is available on their website. Don't let this free money slip away from where it can benefit you and your museum. Please share this news with friends and family!



### And the winner is...

Ann Fair (above) draws the winning ticket for the luxurious Antigua vacation package auctioned by MARC. The drawing was held at MARC's Red, White and Brew event at the Morehead Fair House in Eden on May 14. Marguerite Holt, of Reidsville, is the lucky winner of the trip. MARC thanks all members and friends who supported the museum by purchasing raffle tickets!

### Radio show to share MARC news

MARC is grateful to Ginger Waynick and to our local radio stations for keeping you informed of museum news via radio broadcasts.



Tune in at 8:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. on the fourth Monday of each month for MARC news!

Ginger will host the MARC segments once each month on the WMYN/WLOE stations "Community Accents" program. Programs will include discussions and interviews about exhibits, special events, and projects at the museum.

Shows will also be available on podcast on the WLOE website and on their app.



## Research Tips

### UNC site provides resource to find Rockingham County history on line

Researching Rockingham County? The best places to start are the archives at the MARC and Rockingham Community College, where the brilliant, wonderful staff (if I do say so myself) is ready to help you dig up just what you need.

And then there's the Internet: a treasure trove of historical documents uploaded by archives all over the world, so you can read about the past from the comfort of your couch. But there's always a catch. Sometimes finding the best documents is a little more complicated than typing an inquiry into your preferred search engine.

You might try googling, for example, "women, Rockingham County, NC, Civil War." The first results include a Wikipedia article, a few genealogy websites, and history blogs—all valuable resources, but only a small fraction of what's actually available.

However, if you use those same search terms on UNC Chapel Hill's webpage, Documenting the American South, you'll find the diary Mary Jeffreys Bethell kept of the Civil War. Born in 1821, Bethell kept a journal from 1853 to 1873. Her entry on April 29, 1861 is excerpted below:



Postcard photo of Mary Jeffreys Bethell's home in its later years. The home was located on the Dan River on Perkinson Road, near Berry Hill Bridge. It was destroyed by fire.

*Since I last wrote a change has taken place. Civil War has begun, a bloody affair at Baltimore on the 19<sup>th</sup>, South Carolina took Fort Sumpter, and several men killed on the enemy's side.*

*"The slavery question is the cause of all this trouble, 8 Southern states have seceded from the Union, if the North and South can't agree, they had better separate. Abraham Lincoln the President is opposed to the institution of slavery, he don't seem disposed to make any compromise with the south. The Southern people are raising a large army to defend their Country and their rights.*

Want to read the rest? Here's how to find it: Go to <http://docsouth.unc.edu/index.html>

⇒ Find the "Google Custom Search" box in the top right corner.

(A Google custom search is specific to the website you're on.)

⇒ Type in the search terms above. Bethell's Diary will be one of the first five links.

What else can you find of interest to you at UNC Chapel Hill's Documenting the American South?

By Jordan Rossi, MARC Executive Director



## Recent Events



Photo credit: J. Bullins

### Spring quarter programs entertain and enlighten audiences

**April**—Billy Stevens from the NC Humanities Council (left top with Jordan Rossi) used recordings to demonstrate the progression of Elvis Presley's music and Rock 'N Roll.

**May**—**Red, White and Brew:** (left middle) Guests from across the county gathered to support MARC at the historic Morehead Fair House in Eden. **May**—**Mark Sattler's discussion of the migration of African Americans in the Reconstruction period** provided a helpful exam review for local high school students (bottom left). **June**—**Bob Carlin and Cheick Hamala Diabate** shared the history of the banjo beginning with its roots in Africa (bottom right). This program was presented in cooperation with the Charlie Poole Festival.



Photo credit: J. Bullins



Photo credit: J. Bullins



Photo credit: F. Waynick

## ON YOUR MARC STAFF

Editor & Design: Jean Bullins

Editorial Team: Tilda Balsley  
Libby Barrett  
Bob Carter  
Fletcher Dalton  
Tony Edwards  
Steve Gilliam  
Jane Haines  
Bill Horsley  
Charles Rodenbough  
Jordan Rossi

Contributing  
Photographers: Jean Bullins  
Jordan Rossi  
Fletcher Waynick

## MARC Hours of Operation

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

## MARC Admission

Adult	\$ 5.00
Seniors & Students	\$ 3.50
Children	\$ 2.50
Children under 4	FREE
Family Pass	\$15.00
MEMBERS	FREE

### ***MARC Your Calendar***

**Saturday, August 13—Soirée, “La Dolce Vita”**

At Deep Spring Country Club, Stoneville

**Sunday, September 18—Citizens & Family  
Day at MARC**

Activities to commemorate Citizenship Week

**Thursday, September 22—Board of Directors  
Meeting**

**Saturday, October 22— 2nd Annual Fiddlers  
Convention at the MARC**

Featuring guest musician performances  
(including “Strictly Strings”) and competitions.  
Watch the MARC website for competition  
entry information coming soon!

**Saturday, October 29—Free admission day at  
MARC**

Members who receive newsletters by email save the  
MARC valuable printing and postage costs! You can keep  
your email address current by emailing changes to  
[MARCconnection@gmail.com](mailto:MARCconnection@gmail.com)



*The MARC is a non-profit 501©(3) organization.*

*Financial information about this organization and a copy  
of its license are available from the State Solicitation  
Licensing Branch at (919) 807-2214. This license is not  
an endorsement by the State.*

1086 NC Highway 65  
PO Box 84  
Wentworth, NC 27375



(336) 634-4949  
[MARCconnection@gmail.com](mailto:MARCconnection@gmail.com)  
[www.themarconline.org](http://www.themarconline.org)