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# Raleigh Register

Official Newsletter of the Historic Resources and Museum Program



The grounds at Mordecai Historic Park

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[www.raleighnc.gov/museums](http://www.raleighnc.gov/museums)



RALEIGH Parks,  
Recreation and  
Cultural Resources  
[parks.raleighnc.gov](http://parks.raleighnc.gov)





## Administrator's Letter



**H**ello! We hope you enjoy reading this issue of the *Raleigh Register* and enjoy learning about fun facts and hidden histories at the different sites managed by the Historic Resources and Museum

Program. A zoo at Pullen Park? A hair salon at Pope House Museum? An orphanage at Borden Building? How about a school at Moore Square? Over the years, uses at each site changed over time. Families even altered our venerable buildings such as the Mordecai House or the Tucker House to reflect contemporary tastes and/or needs. Throughout the course of each sites' history, at each site the one constant remained: change. During these uncertain times, we can all find solace in this simple truth.

Speaking of change and fun facts, did you know the Historic Resources and Museum Program now offers virtual programming? Given the circumstances, many of us are finding more time at home these days. While at home, please consider accessing our sites virtually. The best way to get started is to visit our website at [raleighnc.gov/museums](http://raleighnc.gov/museums) or our Facebook page at [facebook.com/RaleighHistoryandMuseums](https://facebook.com/RaleighHistoryandMuseums). We would love for you to continue to visit us and enjoy our programming virtually.

As always, feel free to reach out to me at any time to tell me what you think of our programs or just to chat. I am always interested in ways we can make our programs better and to listen to your feedback.

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## Follow the HRM Program!

Check our social media for the newest additions of upcoming events at all of our sites!

## Chair's Letter



**A**s access to many City of Raleigh sites may be limited, now is a perfect time to catch up on some of the stories behind these places. One of my favorite sites at this time of year is the grounds of the Mordecai House.

In *Gleanings from Long Ago*, Ellen Mordecai shared her memories of growing up at Mordecai Plantation in the 19th century and how she and her family shaped, and were shaped by, the surrounding landscape. In her description of the grounds, Ellen recalled the graceful walnut trees that dotted the landscape and speaks lovingly of the prized climbing roses that once surrounded the family home.

These memories became the inspiration for the design of the Mordecai Visitor Center. Located in the historic Boushall House, the center occupies land sold by the family for construction of what is now the Mordecai neighborhood.

Shaded by a translucent roof, the sitting porch for the center captures the light and shadow of the tree canopy above, and a delicate screen that is carefully patinated to the color of walnut becomes a trellis to support the family's climbing roses. In this way, the Mordecai Visitor Center serves as a reminder of this forgotten landscape.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of the *Raleigh Register*.

Fred Belledin  
Chair, HRM Advisory Board



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# Ask A Historian

by Douglas Porter, Program Director, Historic Sites

**Q** What is the history of the “Green Building” at Mordecai Historic Park? Was it really Raleigh’s first Post Office?

**A** Like several of the structures on the Mordecai Historic Park campus, the “Green Building” served various purposes when it was young and in its prime. So here we go...

The modest structure, which was built in the 1840s with only one room, originally stood near the Wake County Courthouse on the 300 block of Fayetteville Street (the courthouse has been rebuilt several times, but has been in the same location since the 1790s). Sources suggest that it was located more specifically on the southwestern section of the block near the intersection of Fayetteville and Davie Streets, where the Wake County Office Building stands today. Given its location and construction, the structure was almost certainly built to be an office of some type. Though I am unaware of any conclusive evidence indicating it was a post office, records do support this common narrative including period maps which show government offices, including a post office, occupying this section of the city.

By the early 1870s, the building was no longer in use. This is possibly due to the construction of a new post office in the early 1870s, just up the block at the corner of Fayetteville and Davie Streets. Around this time, noted local physician, Dr. Fabius J. Haywood, purchased the building. In 1873, Haywood relocated it to 208 W. South Street and added the second room to the rear of the building. In its new location, the building served as Dr. Haywood’s office for years, perhaps until his death in 1911. Ironically, for this story at least, Dr. Haywood died walking home from the post office. At this point, the old office changed hands and served as a rental property until 1972 when it was slated for demolition. But recognizing the building’s historic significance, the City and Preservationists worked to relocate and restore the structure. An opening ceremony took place at Mordecai Historic Park on July 1, 1976.



The building as it looks today at Mordecai Historic Park.

Your question regarding the history of Raleigh could be answered in the next edition of the *Raleigh Register*.  
Send questions to: [kathryn.neuhart@raleighnc.gov](mailto:kathryn.neuhart@raleighnc.gov)

# Collection Corner

by Ainsley Powell, HRM Curator of Collections

## COVID-19: Raleigh's Stories

To capture Raleigh's history, the HRM Program wants to collect the experiences and stories connected to COVID-19 from all of you!

To participate, use this link for our Google form: [forms.gle/gHtGJdwybokrGJAY7](https://forms.gle/gHtGJdwybokrGJAY7) or email Ainsley Powell, Curator of Collections at [ainsley.powell@raleighnc.gov](mailto:ainsley.powell@raleighnc.gov), for question prompts to be emailed directly to you.



Clipboard, no date, from the Pope House Museum Collection is something that data collectors used in years past to do the same type of work, just in person!

# Friends of COR Museum



This Raleigh Hall of Fame metal was awarded to former Wake County Commissioner and political organizer Betty Ann Knudsen in 2005.

The City of Raleigh Museum is working on a new exhibit celebrating the 19th amendment. *From Mothers to Mayors: The Legacy of the 19th Amendment* will commemorate the hundredth anniversary of women's suffrage. To mark this significant anniversary the Historic Resources and Museum Program staff have been researching the history of the campaigner amendment in Raleigh. Moving beyond the ratification itself, the exhibit explores the 100 years after the amendment's passage and the resulting impacts on local and national politics. These impacts are brought to life through biographies of important female leaders such as Raleigh's first elected female City Councilman, Ruth C. Wilson in 1947, to the city's first female mayor, Isabella Cannon in 1977, as well as our current mayor, Mary Ann Baldwin. The exhibit also highlights differing perspectives woman took on issues that reveal the diversity of their engagement in politics. *From Mothers to Mayors* will feature objects from the COR Museum Collection as well as newly donated artifacts just for this exhibit.

**Be A Friend!**  
To become a Friend, visit:  
[cityofraleighmuseum.org/membership](http://cityofraleighmuseum.org/membership)

## Mordecai Historic Park

### **Fun Fact:**

- ◇ The wooded area surrounding the Mordecai House was once called "Mordecai Grove" and citizens of Raleigh were permitted to use the space for picnics, church services, and May Day celebrations. In 1877, a tornado made its way down Fayetteville Street all the way to Mordecai Grove where it uprooted a few trees before moving on.

### **Did You Know:**

- ◇ In 1877, there was once a fire upstairs started in one of the wardrobes? Minimal damage was done to the house and furniture, but some money stashed away was lost. The newspaper reported that the cause of the fire was rats nibbling matches.

### **Hidden Histories:**

- ◇ The stone that lines the paved path, the mounting block, and the water trough in Mordecai Historic Park are all said to have been moved from the Capitol.

## Raleigh Trolley

### **Fun Facts:**

- ◇ The Raleigh streetcar system opened on Christmas Day in 1886 under the Raleigh Street Railway Company. The original cars were pulled by mules until the cars were switched to an electric system in 1891.
- ◇ Laws were passed to protect animals and people in carriages. Trolleys were banned from blowing their horn at slow-moving animals and were required to stop if they spooked any horses.

## John Chavis Memorial Park and Pullen Park Carousels



John Chavis Memorial Park Carousel

### **Fun Facts:**

- ◇ Ever wonder how carousel music was played before we had iPods? Visit the John Chavis Memorial Park Carousel to see a working band organ which is a 146A Wurlitzer. You can still buy working Wurlitzer reels today!

- ◇ Carousels can range in price depending on the historic value and date in which they were purchased. The Allan Herschel carousel at John Chavis Memorial Park was purchased for a total of \$4,000 in 1937!

### **Did You Know:**

- ◇ John Chavis Memorial Park, a sister park to Pullen, features another historic carousel? The Allan Herschel Carousel was built in 1923 and was purchased for the park in 1937. It has a recently refurbished chariot that includes amazing handcrafted art work displaying important aspects of Raleigh and North Carolina natural history.
- ◇ One of the major differences between the Dentzel Carousel at Pullen Park and the Allan Herschel Carousel at Chavis is the type of animals you can find on the ride. The carousel at Pullen Park has a variety of animals such as pigs, horses, a lion, a tiger, and ostriches while the carousel at John Chavis Memorial Park only has horses!



## Latta University Historic Park

### **Fun Fact:**

- ◇ During an archaeological investigation of the Latta House in 2009, fingerprints of brickmakers were found on multiple bricks.

### **Did You Know:**

- ◇ In 2010, City Council adopted a resolution designating the Latta University Historic Park as a Raleigh Historic Landmark.

### **Hidden Histories:**

- ◇ A stone-lined well original to the property still exists in the park, covered by a concrete slab. While performing an archaeological survey of the well, archaeologists lowered a camera into the well shaft and 6 ft. down found the initials "C.E." painted or etched on one of the stones. While it is unknown who C.E. was, due to its location, they were likely part of the well's original construction, estimated to be in the early 20th century.

## Moore Square

### **Did You Know:**

- ◇ The Moore Square Visitor Center is housed in the Norwood House at 226 E. Martin Street. This was once the home J.M. Norwood who served as the Chief of the Raleigh Police Department for much of the late 19th century.

### **Hidden Histories:**

- ◇ Make sure to look down next time you enter Moore Square! During the most recent renovation, tidbits of history were engraved into the granite thresholds at seven of eight entrances into the Square.
- ◇ The beautiful trees surrounding Moore Square have witnessed Raleigh's history for nearly two centuries. They range in age from 125-200 years old!

## Raleigh Sister Cities

### **Did You Know:**

- ◇ Located in the north of Germany on the Baltic Sea, Rostock has one of the oldest universities in the world, founded in 1419 and running continuously since then.
- ◇ Nairobi houses The Sheldrick Wildlife Trust's orphan elephant rescue and rehabilitation program. The trust operates a digital foster program to allow individuals across the world to foster an orphaned elephant, rhino, or giraffe.



Elephants at The Sheldrick Wildlife Trust in Nairobi.

## Pope House Museum

### **Fun Facts:**

- ◇ Born in 1908, Evelyn Pope was an avid reader. This passion for books led her to receive her Master's in Library Science at Columbia University. She later worked as a librarian at North Carolina Central's School of Law.
- ◇ Delia Haywood Phillips Pope was the second wife of Dr. M. T. Pope and the mother of Ruth and Evelyn Pope. She was also a licensed cosmetologist who learned the Walker Method from attending Madam C.J. Walker's school.
- ◇ A doctor, lieutenant, politician, and entrepreneur. These are just a few titles that belonged to Manassa T. Pope, one of the first licensed African American doctors here in North Carolina!

## Borden Building & Fred Fletcher Park

### **Hidden Histories:**

◇ On the left side of the Borden Building, there is a small iron door that was once used to deliver coal. A popular feature in Victorian and turn-of-the-century homes, the coal would be delivered to the house and dropped down a chute, covered by an iron door like the one seen at Borden. This chute led to the basement next to the furnace where the coal could conveniently be used to heat the building.

◇ Noted horticulturalist J.C. Raulston, a NCSU professor, planted many of the trees currently found at Fletcher Park.

### **Fun Facts:**

◇ In 1900, the Borden Building was the first of several buildings built for the Methodist Home for Children. At one point the campus stretched for over 60 acres and contained a chapel, gymnasium, pool, school, and many dormitories.

## COR Museum

### **Fun Facts:**

- ◇ A 1907 law restricted automobile speed in the downtown area to 6mph. Pedestrians had little to worry about because there were only 56 cars in Raleigh and Wake County by 1910.
- ◇ Royster's Candy Store at 207 Fayetteville Street was one of Raleigh's most beloved sweet shops. But did you know it originally started as a grocery store and confectionary owned by a Union soldier after the Civil War in 1865?

### **Did You Know:**

- ◇ Raleigh's first water tower was built on Morgan Street in 1887 and held 100,000 gallons of water.
- ◇ Jack Johnson, the first African American heavyweight boxer, was injured in a car wreck in Franklinton, NC but no hospital would treat him. Only Raleigh's St. Agnes Hospital would admit him, but it was too late, and he died there in 1946.



Interior of Royster's Candy Store, which was located on Fayetteville Street, ca. 1920s.

## Tucker House



### **Fun Fact:**

◇ The chandelier pictured here hangs in the front room dates to the early 20th century and is original to the house. After being absent from the space for 40 years, it was donated back to the City by the Tucker family and reinstalled in 2018.

### **Hidden Histories:**

- ◇ Tucker House had a private elevator installed in the 1940s to make access to the 2nd floor easier. Today, the elevator does not function, but it still remains hidden towards the back of the house.
- ◇ The Tucker House, now located on Person Street, was originally located one block over on Blount Street until moved in 1975.

## HISTORIC RESOURCES AND MUSEUM PROGRAM

In July 2012, Raleigh City Council created the Historic Resources and Museum Program, hereinafter the HRM Program, with the express purpose of protecting and programming identified cultural, museum, and historic resources within the City of Raleigh.

The HRM Program manages operations and programs at:

- Borden Building and Stone Circle at Fletcher Park
- City of Raleigh Museum
- Fred Fletcher Amphitheater at Fletcher Park
- John Chavis Memorial Park Historic Attractions
- Latta University Historic Park
- Moore Square
- Mordecai Historic Park
- Pope House Museum
- Pullen Park Historic Attractions
- Raleigh Trolleys
- Tucker House

Additionally, The HRM Program manages an artifact collection consisting of more than 21,000 fine and decorative material culture objects.

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# Raleigh Register

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