

OLDEST HOME IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY GETS SIX-FIGURE GRANT FOR RESTORATION

Gift from the National Park Service one of the largest public grants in the museum's history.

CHARLOTTE, N.C., August 28, 2024 – The National Park Service (NPS) recently awarded \$10 million in funding from the Semiquincentennial Grant Program, an initiative commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. “Since its founding, our nation has been shaped by an exceptionally diverse collection of cultures, events, and places” said National Park Service Director Chuck Sams. “The Semiquincentennial Grant Program supports our efforts to present a more complete telling of our country’s history as we approach its 250th anniversary in 2026, and beyond.”

Only nineteen historic sites from around the nation were selected for this round of funding, one of which was the Charlotte Museum of History, which was awarded \$444,500 to complete restoration work on the 1774 Rock House, the oldest home in Mecklenburg County. The house is the former home of Hezekiah Alexander, one of the framers of North Carolina’s first constitution and first bill of rights and who is also believed to be a signer of the legendary Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence.

“We are thrilled to have been selected for this grant and are excited to have resources available to do the work necessary to preserve this home for generations to come. Although we have expanded the stories we share with our programming and exhibits, we have always recognized that this house and all the histories connected to it are at the heart of our existence and mission,” said Terri L. White, president & CEO of the Charlotte Museum of History.

The last major renovation to the 1774 Rock House took place in the lead up to the 1976 US bicentennial. This new grant represents an opportunity to invest in significant updates and restorations to better reflect research undertaken over the last 50 years. It will also help refresh the interpretation of the homesite and create a more immersive, engaging experience for visitors. “The museum community was very different fifty years ago, so we know many of the choices that were made at that time need to be revised for better historical accuracy. The staff is also working on ways to incorporate technology and tactile elements into tours to better engage visitors that won’t compromise the integrity of the site,” says White.

This restoration is being supported in part by the Semiquincentennial grant from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, as well as the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Marion Stedman Covington Foundation. Additional opportunities to support the museum's work will be available throughout the course of the project including the museum's popular 'Set in Stone' program. More information and ways to give can be found at charlottemuseum.org/donate.

About the 1774 Rock House

The 1774 Rock House is the last standing home of a framer of North Carolina's first Constitution and first Bill of Rights, Hezekiah Alexander, who lived in the home until his death in 1801. Finished in 1774, the building is a testament to the craftsmanship and ingenuity of its creators, a reminder of the labor of enslaved people, and the last remaining structure of Charlotte's Revolutionary history. At the homesite, we explore our shared history and plan for a brighter future by telling the story of early Charlotte and all those who called this space home.

The Alexander Homesite was considered a small plantation, where crops and livestock were raised for sustenance and income. Tobacco was the primary cash crop, but corn, peaches, other foods, and textile crops like flax and a small amount of cotton were grown on the site. Livestock included cattle, hogs and pigs, chickens, and turkeys, as well as work animals like horses and mules. There were 12 Alexanders living at the Rock House, plus boarders and visitors, and at least 17 enslaved people whose labors ensured the success of the farm. Combined, the Alexander Homesite tells the stories of at least 29 different people.

[Find more about the 1774 Rock House here.](#)

The Charlotte Museum of History exists to save and share the Charlotte region's history, helping create a better understanding of the past and inspiring dialogue about the future. The museum is the steward of the [1774 Hezekiah Alexander Rock House and homesite](#), which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is the oldest home in Mecklenburg County. The museum is also the home of the [historic Siloam School](#). Visit charlottemuseum.org and follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). The museum is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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