REPORT BY THE PHS PRESIDENT

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources has authorized the erection of a historical highway marker to be placed on Route 29 at Tightsqueeze in honor of Whitnell Pugh Tunstill (1810-1854), a distinguished native son of Pittsylvania County.

Tunstill was the compelling force in the crusade for the Richmond-Danville Railroad that evolved into the great Southern Railroad system. A man with a magnetic personality and oratorical ability, Tunstill led the fight in the General Assembly and was the railroad’s first president (See story on page 3).

Pittsylvania County’s Tunstill District and Whitnell School are named in his honor.

The Pittsylvania Historical Society is joining with Palmer Tunstill (a great-grandson of Whitnell Tunstill) in co-sponsoring a dedication ceremony for the highway marker to be held in the PHS old 1813 Clerk’s Office.

The dedication ceremony is set for Saturday, May 22 at 2 p.m. in the 1813 Clerk’s Office (where Whitnell Tunstill’s father was Clerk of the Court). A reception will follow for all attending.

The public is invited, and the members of our historical society are urged to attend in support of this tribute to one of the county’s outstanding native sons.

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Please be reminded that this month, May 1993 is the time for the annual renewing of your membership in the Pittsylvania Historical Society.

We are extremely proud of all of our 564 members who are scattered in all parts of the USA. We hope not a single one of you will drop out.

Mail renewal ($10 single, $15 couple) to Jeannette Brown, PHS membership secretary, Route 1, Box 8K6, Chatham, VA 24531.

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Pittsylvania Historical Society extends its best wishes and congratulations to the Danville Historical Society and the City of Danville which are in the process of celebrating the city’s bicentennial this month.

PROGRAM FOR THE MAY 17TH MEETING

The speaker will be Ross A. Hotchkiss Jr., Director of Development at the Stewart School in Richmond. Ross is a history buff who has long been active in the promotion of historic preservation in Virginia. As a member of the Hotchkiss family, he has become an authority on the life of Jed Hotchkiss, Stonewall Jackson’s famous Civil War topographer.

Our speaker also will display the Civil War sword of Jed Hotchkiss along with other Hotchkiss memorabilia from his collection. He is Pittsylvania County connected since Bland (Mrs. Lewis) Wall is his daughter.

Remember the meeting will be at the old 1813 Clerk’s Office behind the Town Hall on Monday night, May 17 at 7:30 p.m.
Grew Into Great Southern System

16-Year Crusade For A Railroad in Virginia

In the early days of 1838, a young lawyer from Pittsylvania County, VA listened intently as his colleagues in Virginia's House of Delegates debated a question that struck him as vital not only to his county but to the state's future.

The question being debated on the floor of the General Assembly was whether or not to grant a charter for a proposed railroad from Richmond, VA southward to the City of Danville.

Whitmell Pugh Tunstall had been elected as a delegate to serve the people of Pittsylvania County and Danville. He meant to protect his constituents' best interests.

He must have realized, too, that more was at stake here than the welfare of only his own county and city. He saw the railroad as a boon to the state and the South.

With opposition from special interests and public indifference so apparent that action on granting the charter seemed certain to fail, it was 27-year-old Delegate Tunstall who arose to address the House declaring, "Not enough has been said on a matter of such importance."

The young Pittsylvania delegate held the floor for an hour with a speech filled with logic and eloquence, cutting down one by one the objections raised against the railroad.

It is doubtful that young Tunstall knew his enthusiasm was taking him into a fight that would last the rest of his life - a crusade to bring into existence the establishment of the Richmond and Danville Railroad - and that would evolve into the great Southern Railroad system.

In his speech, Tunstall lashed out at complacency over the "order of things in this state." He said the general feeling seemed to be: "We have gone far enough - there is no need of this thing - we need not improve!"

In concluding his speech in the House that day in 1838, the Pittsylvania Delegate argued for approval of a railroad from Richmond to Danville, but he also urged a strong system of railroads for Virginia and foretold with a startling prophecy the ordeal that was to come in the not too distant future.

"We tread upon burning embers," he warned the fellow delegates. "A cloud has risen on our Northern horizon, which every day magnifies and darkens. We hear the bellowing murmur of the thunder within its boom, and almost see the lightning that precludes the storm. Amidst the storm that threatens us,
gentlemen cry 'peace, peace, peace,' when there is no peace. We forget the history of the past, and yet gentlemen smile and smile and tell us all this is imagination.

"But, sir, if the tempest shall come in its wrath, if in its wildness and fury sweep away and crush that lovely temple which was raised by liberty and purchased by blood - if the pillars of the union must fall, where shall we find a resting place? In that day and hour of trial where shall we stand? How shall we in this state protect ourselves amid that whirlwind of death?

"Let us first do all, everything, to secure the union - to strengthen and preserve it. If that, however, must go, if it must be lost, and if we are to be torn asunder...let us gather together here, in our own state, as the last lone asylum of liberty, firm, united and true, and take steps to provide our people's security to meet the challenge. Otherwise we can not be safe."

In spite of Tunstall's dramatic appeal, the special interest groups who were opposed to the railroad had gotten support of the majority votes in the House of Delegates, and the bill to grant a charter for the proposed railroad failed to pass at the 1838 session.

Undismayed, Tunstall intensified his efforts and support of the railroad at every opportunity. Historian Whit Morris in his book "The First Tunstalls of Virginia" reported that Whitmell "devoted his time to the enterprise up to his death."

It is acknowledged that it was principally due to the endeavors of Whitmell Tunstall - against much short sighted opposition - that on March 8, 1847 the Virginia Legislature granted the charter for the Richmond to Danville railroad which was actually the beginning of the Southern Railway system.

On the day of the bill's passage, Tunstall's elation overflowed in a letter written to his brother-in-law, George Townes.

He wrote: "The railroad bill passed about an hour ago without amendment. 'Tis a glorious triumph. 'Tis the proudest day of my life, and I think I may now say that I have not lived in vain."

When the stockholders of the Richmond and Danville Railroad held their first meeting at Charlotte Court House on November 24, 1847 to organize the company, one of the first acts was to unanimously elect Whitmell Pugh Tunstall as President.

Having won the battle in Richmond, he had to face a continuing struggle of bitter opposition of special interests, lawsuits, financial trouble, landowners who set high prices on land for right of ways, and even the loss of a ship load of steel rails coming from England that sank in a storm at sea.

Tunstall continued to be the guiding force to carry the rail lines forward - slowly but surely.

With the completion of the Richmond and Danville Railroad within sight, Whitmell Tunstall died of typhoid fever on February 19, 1854.

The final mile of the R & D's 140 1/2 miles of the railroad was completed on May 1, 1856, and train service began in July.

With a fleet of 19 engines and with the largest and most powerful named the "W.P. Tunstall."

The R & D rail system performed a gallant service for the Confederacy during the War Between the States especially in transporting supplies and troops. This had been foretold by Tunstall when he started the fight to get the railroad on that day in 1838.

Temperamentally and intellectually, Tunstall entered the struggle well-armed
for public acceptance of the railroad because he had quick wit, good humor, great personal charm and keen intelligence.

A brief look into his background indicates that he was considered to be advanced for his age.

Whitmell Pugh Tunstall was born April 15, 1810 at "Belle Grove," his family plantation a few miles south of Chatham (now called Fairview in the Tightsqueeze Community.)

He was the eighth child of William Tunstall (who was the Pittsylvania County Clerk of Court) and Sarah Winifred Pugh Tunstall. His mother died 11 days after his birth.

Growing up under the care and attention of his oldest sister, Eliza, Whitmell entered Danville Academy at the nearby city for his preparatory schooling at the age of nine, and at 14, he enrolled at the University of North Carolina and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree at 17.

After graduating, Whitmell read law in the law office of his brother-in-law, George Townes, who had married Eliza. He was admitted to the Virginia bar in 1832.

After practicing law for several years, Tunstall campaigned for the state legislature and won election to the Virginia House of Delegates in 1836. It was in 1837 that he made his famous speech in support of the R & D Railroad that launched him on his 16 year struggle to accomplish his goal to replace the state's ancestral mode of transportation with the steam engine.

Tunstall also served several more terms in the House and also won election to the State Senate.

Tunstall was twice married, first in 1831 to Celetia Gomeke, who died two years later without issue. His second marriage was in 1840 to Mary M. Liggat of Lynchburg, and they had six children.

In commemoration of one of Pittsylvania County's most distinguished native sons, the Pittsylvania Board of Supervisors named one of its seven magisterial districts - Tunstall District - and named Whitmell (High) School and Whitmell Post Office in honor of Whitmell Pugh Tunstall. His handsome oil portrait hangs in the courtroom of the Pittsylvania County Courthouse, and one also is in the offices of the Southern Railway Company.

Tunstall is buried at "Belle Grove" (built around 1795) about a mile east from Route 29 at Tightsqueeze.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: A Virginia historical highway marker honoring the memory of Whitmell Tunstall will be dedicated in a special ceremony in the Pittsylvania Historical Society's 1813 Clerk's Office at Chatham on Saturday, May 22 at 2 p.m. with a reception to follow. The public is invited.

I am fully aware that my youth has been spent, That my get-up-and-go has got-up-and-went. But I really don't mind when I think with a grin Of all the swell places my get-up has been.
Pittsylvania County's
Civil War Gun Factory

By Herman Melton

At the height of the Battle of Antietam, Lee's outnumbered Confederate troops found themselves hunkered down in a line on the banks of a creek near an old Dunkard Church.

Longstreet was on the right, Harvey Hill was in the center and Stonewall Jackson was on the left. The forces of each waited for an attack from Generals Ambrose Burnside, "Bull" Sumner and Joe Hooker respectively. So ferocious was the Union charge that a Rebel rout appeared eminent.

Indeed, such would have been the case had not A.P. Hill arrived with his troops in double time from Harper's Ferry at that very moment. By the time a merciful darkness covered the horrifying scene, 6,000 men lay dead and another 17,000 wounded lay in agony. It was the Confederacy's bloodiest afternoon so far.

Every Pittsylvania County Civil War buff knows that there were soldiers from the county in the carnage at Antietam. It is not generally known, however, that rifles from a Pittsylvania County gun factory may have made their first appearance in the war that afternoon.

Limited records available show that the last of the first hundred rifles from Bilharz, Hall and Co. of Pittsylvania Courthouse, had been delivered to the Confederate Ordinance Department in Richmond on September 16, 1862 - the day before Antietam.

It is known that Bilharz, Hall and Co. began producing muzzle loaded carbines a month earlier. Before the war ended, they produced hundreds more.

The gun factory was built in what appears to have been a tin shop/foundry on Main Street in the Town of Chatham, VA. According to the deed, its location was in back of the Masonic Lodge Hall some 1,400 feet north of the Courthouse on land the partnership purchased of George A. Carter.

The partnership was an interesting one with Candidus Bilharz as the guiding genius. Bilharz was an immigrant from Baden, Germany who was naturalized in Pittsylvania County in 1859. He was a harness maker, vintner/distiller, miller
and mechanic who lived near Tanyard Branch in Chatham. Bilharz was connected to the prominent Bolanz family which emigrated from Baden, Germany also.

George Hall was a prominent businessman who owned a small tin shop along with extensive land holdings in the county. Records show him acting in various official capacities on behalf of the county during the Civil War.

Col. Coleman D. Bennett was a silent partner in the firm and was presumably its chief benefactor. Bennett was a man of enormous wealth who owned vast tracts of county land plus a whole block of buildings on Main Street in downtown Chatham.

Thirty-eight people were employed by the gun works, and those fit for military service were given Confederate draft deferments.


Ages of the workers ranged from 18 to 40. Job titles included the following: Stocker, Rifling Hand, Polisher, Vice Hand, Band Holder, Helper and Mechanic.

The 400 or so rifles produced from August of 1862 through March of 1864 (when operations ceased) were manufactured under contract with the Confederate Ordinance Department.

One type of carbine was muzzle loaded and the other was of the "rising breech" type. The latter sold for $45 each. A few of these are extant in the hands of collectors, including one with a serial number 353.

Records show that the firm purchased thousands of pounds of "skelp iron" from the Confederate government for use in rifle barrels. The company also manufactured 1745 wooden stocks at a dollar each for other rifle factories - thus adding to Bilharz, Hall's Historical importance.

Yes, Bilharz, Hall & Co. was a busy place and by romanticizing one can believe that their rifles were carried in Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg.

For reasons carefully listed however, their guns consistently got low marks from Confederate inspectors. Ironically, their deficiencies may account for the paucity of them today. As every gun collector knows, when a rifle failed, the Civil War soldier simply threw it away. However, a good one, was highly prized and retained assiduously.

In any case, a Bilharz, Hall rifle is said to be worth $10,000 - an unusual price for a gun that originally cost $45 - F. O. B. Chatham.

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NOTE: Most of the historical material appearing here was passed on to the writer by Judge Langhorne Jones, dec'd. shortly before his death.

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A CONSERVATIVE IS...

1. A conservative is one who believes we have something of value to conserve; 2. A conservative believes in keeping the government out of business.

Life is like a fine-tuned piano. What kind of music you get out of it depends on how well you play the instrument.

If you think education is expensive...try ignorance!
Col. William Byrd's Observations 1728-33

The very earliest first-hand accounts of present day Pittsylvania County are found in the famous writings of Col. William Byrd. Byrd led a surveying party to mark the line between Virginia and North Carolina in 1728, then returned in 1733 through the same area en route to land he was granted in payment for the survey, which he named "Eden" (North Carolina), immediately to the south and southwest of Pittsylvania County. Both of his journeys were faithfully recorded in his diaries, now known and often-reprinted as William Byrd's Histories of the Dividing Line betwixt Virginia and North Carolina and A Journey to the Land of Eden.

The purpose of this article is to note the most easily visited points along Col. Byrd's journeys, and to make reference to some of his most interesting comments written about those sites.

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1. FIRST CROSSING OF THE DAN RIVER

AT THE MILTON BRIDGE ON VA/NC 62

Here Byrd and his surveying party crossed the "South Branch of the Roanoke River the first time" on October 10, 1728. Byrd commented, "The Bottom was cover'd with a coarse Gravel, Spangled very thick with a Shining Substance, that almost dazzled the eye, and the Sand upon either Shore Sparkled with the same Splendid Particles. At first sight, the Sun-Beams giving a Yellow cast to the Spangles made us fancy them to be Gold-Dust, and consequently that all our Fortunes were made.... But we soon found our Selves mistaken, and our Gold Dust dwindled into small Flakes of isinglass (mica). However, tho' this did not make the River so rich as we cou'd wish, yet it made it exceedingly Beautiful."

For a close look at the river, drive into the boat-launch access road beside the bridge.

2. CANE CREEK CAMPSITE

ALONG NC 1527

Here, in the broad flat field on the west side of Cane Creek, Byrd and his surveyors camped on the night after first crossing the Dan. "We crost a Creek 2 1/2 Mils beyond the River, call'd Cane Creek, from very tall Canes, which lin'd its Banks (native bamboo). On the West Side of it we took up our Quarters. The Horses were very fond of those Canes but at first they purg'd them exceedingly .... Our Indian kill'd a Deer, & and the other Men some Turkeys...."

It was apparently at this location that Byrd chose the name "Dan" for the river just crossed, recalling Bible imagery in which the land of Dan was the northern boundary of the Promised Land: "We call'd this South Branch of Roanoke the Dan ...." As mentioned above, Byrd later gave the name "Eden" to his own private portion of this VA-NC promised land.

3. ANOTHER CAMPSITE AND

4. FIRST VIEW OF THE BLUE RIDGE

NEAR THE GOODYEAR PLANT

After crossing the Dan a second time, the surveying party camped here (just South of VA 737 and west of its curve in front of the Goodyear plant) on the night of October 11. "We encampt about two Miles beyond the River, where we made good cheer upon a very fat Buck, that luckily fell in our way. The Indian (Bearskin) likewise Shot a Wild Turkey...."

The group also got their first glimpse of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the west: "I had foretold on the Credit of a Dream which I had last Sunday Night, that we shou'd see the Mountains, this day, & it proved true, for Astrolabe (William Mayo, surveyor) discover'd them very plain to the NW of our Course, tho at a great Distance."
Col. William Byrd's Observations
1728-1733

Self-guided tour of Pittsylvania County's Southern Boundary

(Keyed to Map)

Col. William Byrd II

Compiled and drawings by HENRY H. MITCHELL
5. IROQUOIS CAMP DISCOVERED
ON PUMPKIN CREEK SOUTH OF US 265

At this location on the evening of September 25, 1733, Col. Byrd and a small party of men camped on the way to his land grant “Eden,” the corner of which was only 4 miles to the west-southwest of this point. “(We) quarter’d on a rising Ground a Bow-Shot from (a plentiful Run of very clear Water). We had no sooner pitcht the Tents, but one of our Woodsmen alarm’d us with the News that he had follow’d the Track of a great Body of Indians to the place where they had lately encamp’t. That there he had found no less than Ten Huts, the Poles whereof had Green Leaves still fresh upon them. That each of these Huts had Shelter’d at least Ten Indians, who, by some infallible Marks, must have been Northern (Iroquois) Indians. That they must needs have taken their departure from thence no longer ago than the day before. .... These Tidings I could perceive were a little Shocking to some of the Company, and particularly the little Major (Mumford), whose Tongue had never lain still was taken Speechless for 16 Hours.”

The group spent the night here without incident, and proceeded safely on to “Eden” the next day.

6. STATE HISTORICAL MARKER
RECOGNIZING THE SAPONI RELIGION
ALONG NORTHBOUND US 29

In May 1988, a state historical marker was placed here recognizing Col. Byrd’s discussions with Ned Bearskin, the Saponi whom Byrd had hired as a hunter to provide food for his surveying party. This was the first marker in the state to recognize an aspect of Native American culture rather than a conflict. The marker reads: “SAPONI RELIGIOUS BELIEFS EXPLAINED. On 12-15 October 1728 Col. William Byrd II and his party camped just west of here while surveying the Virginia-North Carolina boundary.

Bearskin, Byrd’s Saponi guide, described his tribe’s religious beliefs, which, wrote Byrd in his diary, contained, ‘the three Great Articles of Natural Religion: the Belief of a God; the Moral Distinction betwixt Good and Evil; and the Expectation of Rewards and Punishments in another World.’ Bearskin’s religion also included a Hindu-like belief in reincarnation.”

7. BYRD-BEARSKIN CAMP SITE
AT END OF VA 1140 (PRINCETON ROAD)

Here (at the dead end of the road) is the location where Col. Byrd and his surveying party camped, and where the discussion with Bearskin commemorated by the historical marker took place.

On October 15, the Byrd party left this spot and crossed the river just a few hundred yards to the west.

8. INDIAN CORNFIELDS
VA 880 AT THE STATE LINE BRIDGE

Here, on October 16, 1728, the surveying party found the Dan River impossible to ford. “...The Line intersected the Dan the fifth time ... but the Surveyors cou’d find no Safe ford over the River. This obliged us to ride two Miles up the River (south, into North Carolina) in quest of a Ford, and by the way we traverst Several Small Indian
Thirty Years of Research Produces Family History

Carl and Lorene Bennett Dunbar of El Paso, TX announce the publication of their genealogy: "Forebears of Four Dunbars" which has evolved from nearly 30 years of searching cemeteries, courthouses and libraries across the nation.

An interesting thing about the Dunbar’s book is that it not only covers the Dunbar and Bennett family histories, which are documented for 350 years, but it traces 64 different grandparents who head up 64 Allred family histories (from A to W). It is pointed out that each of the more than 400 grandparents bear equal relationship to the Dunbars and Bennetts even though they have different surnames.

A section of the book is devoted to "Life Among The Dunbar Forebears" which depicts their lives, their homes, occupations and customs.

The book is completely indexed, has pictures and biographies. It has been placed in 500 public libraries, genealogical and family history centers across the country. (It is at the Danville Public Library). - By Mrs. R.W. Grubb, Chatham, VA. For information write Carl Dunbar, 5033 Love Road, El Paso, TX 79922.

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LOOKING FOR A TOWN?

If you are looking for a town that no longer exists or the name has been changed, you can get assistance by writing to the U.S. Board of Geographics Names, 523 National Center, Reston, VA 22092.

CIVIL WAR ANCESTORS

Department of the Army, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barricks, PA 17013 is in the process of updating and adding to their Civil War Department files and will be glad to have pictures and any information you may want to contribute to your Civil War ancestor memory.

-From Cottage Grove, Oregon, Gen. Society.

NAME OF WOMEN OF SCOTLAND DON'T CHANGE

When researching women of Scotland, look for their birth name because that is what appears in all legal transactions including their death records. The name at birth remains their legal name throughout a woman's life in Scotland.

-From Marty Fartig.

COL. WILLIAM BYRD'S OBSERVATIONS - CONTINUED...

Fields, where we conjectur'd the SWARO'S (Sauras, Cheraws) had been used to plant Corn, the Town where they had liv'd lying Seven or Eight Miles more Southerly, upon the Eastern Side of the River.”

Cornfields still line the river at this point today.

9. CASCADE CREEK CAMPSITE

ALONG VA 860

As the gravel road crosses a bridge over Cascade Creek, one can look downstream to the site where the Byrd party camped on the evening of October 17, 1728: "We markt out our Quarters on the Banks of a purling Stream, which we call'd Casquade Creek, by reason of the Multitude of Water-Falls that are in it."

On the morning of October 18, "We crost Casquade Creek over a Ledge of Smooth Rocks, and then Scuffled thro' a mighty Thicket, at least three Miles long."
Prisoners Dream of escaping
'Truly Horrible' Danville Civil War Prisons
By Patricia B. Mitchell

During the Civil War, six Danville, Virginia tobacco warehouses were converted to use as prisons for captured Union soldiers. The brick or wooden structures were stripped of all furnishings, including chairs and lamps. Before long Inspecting Officer Lieutenant Colonel A.S. Cunningham wrote,

"The prisons at this post are in a very bad condition, dirty, filled with vermin, little or no ventilation and there is an insufficiency of fireplaces ....It is a matter of surprise that the prisoners can exist in the close and crowded rooms, the gas from the coal rendering the air fetid and impure. (A single pot-bellied stove was installed on each floor of the building.) The prisoners have almost no clothing, no blankets, and a very small supply of fuel....The mortality...about five per day, is caused, no doubt, by the insufficiency of food...and for the reasons...stated above. This state of things is truly horrible...."

During the 15 months, between December 1863 and February 1865, that Danville housed Federal prisoners, brutally cold weather and sweltering heat exacerbated the suffering of the men. "Like starving dogs" the Northern men fought for pitiful food dumped on the dirt - and excrement - encrusted floors. They whistled down wooden warehouse rafters to the breaking point to obtain slivers of wood which they boiled to make "coffee."

They attempted to stomach "rat dung in the rice, pea bugs in the peas and worms in the cabbage soup." They fought a smallpox epidemic, the scourge of scurvy, and the disgusting battle of diarrhea, worsened by the humiliation of restricted latrine privileges.

During the last year of the war, 3,000 Union prisoners were marched the 70 miles from Lynchburg to Danville. One large procession of these prisoners was halted for the night in a broad field across the road from the Carter mansion known as Oakland (now the Grisales home on U.S. 29 just south of Tightsqueeze.) Widow Lucy Neale Carter took pity on the famished Northerners and directed her slaves to work far into the night, baking cornbread in an open fireplace in the large brick kitchen to the rear of the house.

Other local people also brought things to eat, despite the scarcity of food among the Southern populace. Dr. Rawley Martin drove out from Chatham, bringing provisions, saying that, having been a prisoner of war, he knew what it was to be hungry.

While Federal soldiers were held in Danville prisons of war, citizens often continued to feel compassion toward them, and some kind hearts visited and brought foodstuffs. Despite such charitable actions, the chief hope among the imprisoned men was to "put distance between (them)elves and Danville." In the meantime, of all the complaints concerning their situation, the Yankees railed out most against the quantity and quality of food.

The basic diet consisted of corn and corn cob ground together and made into "half-baked" bread. Once in a while a skimpy potato was offered. In a four-month period Colonel Henry Sprague of Connecticut reported receiving, in addition to the corn-cob meal and potatoes, minuscule portions of "nameless portions of the
animal economy," thin soup, salted fish and sorghum syrup.
The wormy prison gruel was diluted with "eighty pailfuls" of Dan River water. Prisoner Alfred S. Roe reported on rats, saying that "those initiated claim that (they) made excellent soup." Alfred Roe also wrote that some cellmates enjoyed boiled and stewed rats, in addition to rat soup. One of the prisoners, a Frenchman, was observed eating the vermin which he collected from his blanket and body.

Major Abner Small of Maine wrote about Danville, "...We had so little to eat that our brain cells were denuded of blood caus(ing) dizziness, and occasional fainting fits." Hallucinations and hopes of freedom motivated soldiers to dream and scheme about escaping. Several breaks were attempted. Harlan Smith Howard of Cottage Grove, Wisconsin, reported on his short stay in Danville,

"(Nov. 13th 1863)... At 9 p.m. arrive at said place & are put in Tobacco manufactory .... (Nov. 14th) Like our building very well. No rations up to 7 p.m. at which time I make my escape from the building & town.... (Nov. 15th) (T)ravelled all night along bank of Dan river on south side. Rain'd a little. At day break are 6 miles from said town, fall in with friend who secrets us in barn & brings us sweet potatoes for breakfast & dinner, chicken soup -- potatoes & corn bread & apples for supper ...." (Howard trekked over 300 miles and made it home safely.)

One escape strategy indirectly involved food. Second Lieutenant Joseph Ferguson recorded in his journal that men volunteered to go to the river for water. En route a few would dawdle and then dart over to the site of an old bakery where they would hide in the large empty ovens. It is not known exactly how many escaped this way, but many "oven men" did, waiting for the cover of night to leave the soon-to-be "Last Capital of the Confederacy."

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Patricia Mitchell has recently published Yanks, Rebels, Rats, and Rations: Scratching for Food in Civil War Prison Camps, 37 pages including footnotes, available at historic sites and museums across the country, or directly from her at P.O. Box 429, Chatham, VA 24531. To order from the author, send $3 per copy, plus $2 for shipping per order.

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OF INTEREST TO BAPTISTS

The Baptists of Virginia have quite a collection of Baptist material such as photographs, genealogical and historical data, exhibits in the Boatwright Memorial Library of the University of Richmond. An entire wing houses these items of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society. Researchers into Virginia Baptist history will find far more here than in Nashville. The address is Virginia Baptist Historical Society, P.O. Box 34, University of Richmond, VA 23173.

INFORMATION ABOUT MAILING LETTERS

Major postal centers use optical scanners to read the addresses on letters, and the scanner reads from the bottom to the top thus reading the zip code first. Typed addresses on envelopes will arrive at their destination one day earlier than hand written addresses. When "Attention" is put at the bottom of an address, it will cause the envelope to be kicked out until it is usually sorted. Using zip code plus four will help speed delivery time by a day.
May 1993 Queries
(Free to members to aid others with similar interests.)

Seek information on lines of MAYS, DOVE, PLEXICO, BUTCHER and SAUNDERS, whose families lived in Pittsylvania Co., VA around 1800. William BUTCHER m. Nancy PLEXICO, William SAUNDERS m. Ann DOVE, Frances SAUNDERS m. Stacy MAYS, Booker SAUNDERS m. Lattice MAYS. Is there anyone who is related to these people. Please write to Ila M. DULIN, Route 2, Box 149, N. Venton, Iowa 52349.

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Searching information on the following families: FINNEY, MOOREFIELD, VERNON, COOPER, GRAVELY, TURPIN, SHACKLEFORD, RAMSEY, MATTHEWS and ZIGLER. If you can help me, please write to John BURROWS, 815 Hartsock Blvd., Roanoke, VA 24014.

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AVERY/MUSTAIN. Request information to either confirm or refute the marriage of Mary AVERY (?) and Thomas MUSTAIN in mid-1750's. Further request any information regarding parentage and siblings of Mary "Avery" MUSTAIN. Write to Lowell H. LANDRE, Box 613342, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96152-3342.

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Want to correspond with anyone having information about William BENNETT, b. 1703, m. Hannah GOAD, daughter of John GOAD. Second son of Stephen BENNETT m. Grissell Wade, daughter Edward WADE. They lived on Frying Pan Creek 1767 to 1778. Please write to Wilma Qualls BENNETT, Route 5, Box 380, Blanchard, OK 73010.

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Want to exchange information on GAULDIN/GAUDLING, especially interested in Samuel, b. 1733, d. 1785 and wife Elizabeth TURNER. Their son William T., b. 1752, d. 1841, m. Margaret GAULDIN. Please write Barbara GRAY, 1176 Bel Aire, Ramoul, IL 61866.

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Seeking information on Nathaniel JUDD, b. 1745, his father, Rowland JUDD, b. 1725, his wife was Elizabeth OWENS, b. 1750(?) in Pittsylvania County, VA. They married 1773, her father was William OWENS, b. 1702 in Prince George County, VA. Write Margo MCBRIDE, 1005 Cardiff, Crystal Lake, IL 60014-8705.

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Seek information on Charles BOAZ, born in Kentucky 1830 (?) and may be related to earlier Boazes in Pittsylvania County, VA. Charles' son John BOAZ, b. 1859 in Illinois. Any information will be appreciated. Write to Thomas BOAZ, 315 Margo Lane, Berwyn, PA 19312.

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Searching for marriages of sons of John HICKEY and Mary Middleton HICKEY before 1800. Their children were born in Virginia. Write to Ruth Mary MAPLES, 5211 Mountain Dr. Amarillo, TX 79108.

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Looking for information on the WADE, WYCHE, TAYLOR and/or RICHARDSON families of Virginia and the Carolinas, and their ties with the HUNTS. Also information on the William and Henry HUNT line, especially Henry Wyche HUNT who moved to Mississippi and James Green HUNT who went to South Carolina about 1785. Is there anyone in North Carolina to whom I could write for some of this information. Please write to Robert HUNT, 105 Coral Reef Drive, Goose Creek, SC 29445.
HALL, DEARMORE. Need information about John HALL and daughter, Gillian Ann Hall SHELTON, b. September 25, 1801 in Pittsylvania County, VA. She married second, Barnett DEARMORE (b. December 15, 1803 in VA) on September 8, 1924 in Pittsylvania County, VA. Barnett DEARMORE's father was John DEARMORE. I especially need names of wives of John HALL and John DEARMORE. Also their ancestry further back in time. The DEARMOREs migrated to Madison County TN in early 1830's. Barnett and Gillian (Gilly) Ann DEARMORE migrated to Upshur Co., TN in early 1850's and lived there remainder of their lives. I am a long-time researcher of these families and their descendants. Will exchange information. Please write to Martha Mullens TUTT, Box 105, Merceces, TX 78570.

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Does anyone have any information on Catherine WELLS who was the first wife of Abraham S. EANES, m. 1815. What was her full name and the names of her children? Write Paul E. EANES, 417 Ashford Circle, La Grange, GA 30241.

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Searching for ancestry of David GRANT, d. 1781, m. Faith FEATHERSTON, d. 1797. Two subsequent generations lived in Halifax County, VA. Son James, b. 1768, Halifax County, m. Nov. 28, 1786 Sally KIDD. Their son, Stephen, b. 1793, Halifax, m. Oct. 10, 1816 to Nancy FORREST. Steven's daughter Sallie Ann ( my great-great-grandmother) b. Aug. 20, 1824, Washington County, KY, m. Aug. 28, 1845 George Alexander BROWN. Would appreciate missing date: e.g. did David come from Scotland. Write James R. BROWN, 21875 Longeway Road, Sonora, CA 95370.

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Is anyone doing research on families of GRUBB, LOVE, HODGES and KEESEE? These are the names in my family tree. Please write to Evelyn C. BARST, Box 8464 SVL, Victorsville, CA 92392.

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Does anyone know who John MUSTAIN of Mecklenburg Co., VA was, who was called John senior in 1778? Was his wife Elizabeth? Was John the brother of Thomas MUSTAIN, whose wife was Mary? Was two of their sons named Avery and Jesse? Write to Oildene HARRIS, Route 2, Box 345, West Plains, MO 65775.

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Need names of parents of Mary Anna YOUST who married John Christopher BOYER. She was b. June 20, 1756 Pa. Also need death date of Mary MARTIN, (d. after 1820 census, Pittsylvania County, VA) Write Lula Belle TONER, 28448 E. 121 St., Coweta, OK 74429

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Seeking information on families of Patrick STILL, d. 1775 Pittsylvania County, VA and his possible son, Thomas, m. Lucy. (Estate settled 1822) Write David GREEN, 1412 S. 4th Ave., Thatcher, AZ 85552.

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February "Packet," article about "Hardship of Revolutionary War," referred to "Widow MCDANIEL" as rendezvous place where militia was formed. Can anyone identify the widow and where site was located. Write Evelyn M. WARD, 2650-A Grosvenor Place, Winston-Salem, NC 27106.
Open to Tours in 1993

Winery in Pittsylvania Dates Back to 1869

By Patricia B. Mitchell

Virginia Wineries -- An Experience Worth Savoring: 1993 Festival & Tour Guide, distributed by the Virginia Wine Marketing Program, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23209 (804-786-0481), includes the following entry for Pittsylvania County's own historic Tomahawk Mill at Climax:

Tomahawk Mill Winery, Route 3, Box 204, Chatham, VA 24531, (804)-432-1063, Walter Crider, President. Pittsylvania County. Enjoy fine Chardonnay in an historic water-powered grist mill and vineyard overlooking the mill pond. Wines: Chardonnay. Tours and tastings, Sat. 9 to 5 March to December 24 and by appointment. Directions: From Rocky Mount, Route 40 East, right on Rt. 626 South, 8.2 miles left on Route 649 to Tomahawk Mill Winery on right.

For readers of The Packet, it should be noted that directions from Chatham are: Route 57 West 4 miles, right on Route 799, 4.5 miles to Climax, left on Route 649, 3 miles to Tomahawk Mill Winery on left.

Except for Chateau Morrisette Winery in Meadows of Dan, the Tomahawk is the westernmost winery listed in the guide. Walter Crider is pioneering the revival of Pittsylvania County viniculture, an industry which was active here over a century ago.

According to local researcher Herman Melton, a document recorded in Deed Book 63 at the courthouse in Chatham shows that plantation owner James M. Conway of Spring Garden and German-born rifle manufacturer Candidus Bilharz of Chatham entered into an agreement on January 8, 1869 to plan 5,000 grapevines for wine production to be supervised by Bilharz, on an 800 acre farm known as "Cedar Hill."

It is not known whether the contract was ever fulfilled. An 1878 map of Chatham shows a distillery operated by the Bolanz family (also German) located near Chatham's old ice plant at Chatham Hall's present-day entrance on Pruden Street. According to local tradition, the western slope of what is now the Chatham Hall campus was planted in grapes, the harvest of which was apparently used in Bolanz wines and brandies.

Pittsylvania's vintner of today, Walter Crider, retired from the Environmental Protection Agency several years ago and returned to the gristmill built by his great-uncle James Anderson. He planted his first grapevines in March 1988, harvested his first grapes in August 1990, and released his first vintage of Chardonnay in February 1991.

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"To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root." -Chinese proverb.
Pittsylvania Courthouse Is National Historic Landmark

The county judge occupying the bench in the Pittsylvania County, VA, Courthouse at Chatham and twelve other judges from Southside and Central Virginia were indicted by a Federal Grand Jury and arrested on a bench warrant issued by the Federal District Court Judge in Danville on March 17, 1879.

They were charged with violation of the Fourteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1875 by excluding black men from petit and grand jury lists in 1878.

The Commonwealth of Virginia chose to make the case of the Pittsylvania County judge a test case before the Supreme Court of the United States, where it became known as EX PARTE VIRGINIA.

That body upheld the action of the lower court in 1880, thereby ruling that any judge excluding black men from jury lists was in violation of federal law.

The significance of EX PARTE VIRGINIA is that, as a landmark decision, it represented one of the earliest legal victories for blacks in the civil rights movement in the post-Reconstruction period.

Since the cause, which involved a Constitutional issue, emanated from the Pittsylvania County Courthouse, the edifice received the designation "National Historic Landmark" in 1987 (during the commemoration of the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution).

Herman Melton

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MELTON HAS ANOTHER BOOK COMING

Herman Melton, author of two books on "Pittsylvania's Eighteenth Century Grist Mills," which attracted many readers, is now coming out soon with a new book entitled, "Picks, Tracks and Batteaux; Industry In Pittsylvania County, 1750-1950."

Melton, author and historian, is a regular contributor to The Packet.

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PHS HAS 564 MEMBERS

Jeanette Brown, membership secretary, says The Packet has a circulation of 564, going to 38 states, D.C. and Japan. Jeannette reminds that May is the month for renewing memberships. (See coupon on back page.)

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All that money you saved for a rainy day now buys a much smaller umbrella.

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Money may talk, but today's dollar doesn't have enough cents to say very much.

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Money can't buy happiness, but it can help you look for it in a lot more places.
REYNOLDS FAMILY REUNION AT ARLINGTON, VA
JUNE 21-26

The Reynolds Family Association will hold its 68th annual reunion June 21-26 at Arlington, VA at the Rosslyn Westpark Hotel.

The Reynolds Family Association was organized in 1892 and includes all Reynolds families regardless of when the early ancestors arrived in America or how the name is spelled, and the reunion is open to anyone who wishes to attend.

Registration fee is $30. For more information contact Sybil R. Taylor, 4004 Javis Drive, Alexandria, VA 22310.

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"EVERYTHING COMING UP ROSES" AT RICHMOND, VA
JUNE 11-13

The fifth Rose Genealogical Research Conference will be held at the Marriott Hotel in Richmond, VA on June 11, 12 and 13.

The three day conference, "Everything Is Coming Up Roses" is sponsored by the nationwide Rose Family Association.

Well-known speakers and nationally known experts in genealogy will be on the program. Also included will be family displays and sharing of family records.

Christine Rose points out this is not the traditional "family reunion." It is open to anyone and will be attended by Rose descendants from over the USA. For more information write to Rose Family Association, 1474 Montelegre Drive, San Jose, CA 95120.

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BOOK ABOUT JEB STUART AND HIS STAFF

Robert J. Trout's story of Major General "Jeb" Stuart and his staff, entitled "They Followed The Plume," will be coming off the press soon.

Trout wrote to Mrs. Lucille Payne, former president of the Pittsylvania Historical Society and editor of the "Quill Pen" to thank her for her help in collecting some of the information for his book.

He said the process of collecting and writing the book had taken seven years.

Trout explains his book is the story of a forgotten group of 48 men who sometimes served where the bullets were the thickest.

The author says the book lets you ride again with those who followed "Jeb" Stuart's "plume" the closest in the struggle to serve the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia.

The book may be ordered by writing Robert J. Trout, 119 N. Railroad St., Myerstown, PA 17067 (Price $24.95 plus $3 postage)

PHS HONORS AUSTIN E. JONES

The Pittsylvania Historical Society is proud to have honored Austin E. Jones by presenting him with a Certificate of Appreciation at the February meeting.

The plaque was inscribed with these words: "In recognition and grateful appreciation for Austin E. Jones' many years of service through his music, as organizer and director of the "Tightsqueeze Philharmonic Orchestra," and for providing enjoyment and entertainment by promoting, singing and playing songs of former years, thus helping to preserve a vestige of our musical heritage."
WE RECEIVE LETTERS

Please run my query in The Packet. I've gotten such good response from my previous query. Ila M. Dulin, Route 2, Venton, IO 52349.

I received a response to my query within a week after The Packet was circulated. I want you to know I really enjoy The Packet. John Burrows, 815 Hartsook Blvd. Roanoke, VA 24014.

I am interested in receiving The Packet because I am interested in Pittsylvania County and Virginia because my ancestors lived there around 1800. Martha Mullens Tutt, Box 105, Mercedes, TX 78570.

I want to receive your publication The Packet as noted in the Genealogical Helper. Mrs. Pattie Cummings, 151 Lynwood Drive, New Whiteland, IN 46184.

I really enjoy The Packet. It is a wonderful snapshot of our heritage of the past. We appreciate your work. Paul E. Eanes, 417 Ashford Circle, La Grange, GA 30241.

I want to order the Pittsylvania Historical Society magazine. I will send check for a year's subscription. Edna C. Broner, 580 Maxine Lane, Kimberly, ID 83341.

I really enjoy reading the PHS publication which is among those we receive at the Bedford City Museum. Kenneth E. Crouch, Route 3, Box 355, Bedford, VA 24523.

My name is David W. Green, and I am researching my family history. My Green family lived in Brosville in Pittsylvania County, VA about 1760. I have always been proud of my Virginia heritage, and I want to learn more about the area and the people. Therefore, I want to join your organization and receive your publication. Dave Green, 1412 S. 4th Avenue, Thatcher, Arizona 85552.

I have seen a copy of the Pittsylvania Historical Society publication The Packet and I am very pleased to have received such fast response to my inquiry regarding your society. My ancestor William Durret lived in your county 1767 to 1792. I am looking forward to learning much more about your county when reading The Packet. Patty Cummings, 151 Lynwood Drive, New Whiteland, IN 46184-1411.

"THE PACKET" -- Published by the
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Box 1206 -- Chatham, Virginia -- Phone (804) 432-5031
Preston B. Moses, President & Editor of "The Packet"
Frances Hurt, Vice President Katherine Buck, Corresponding Secty.
Ivelle Saunders, Treasurer Jeannette Brown, Membership Secty.
Membership Dues: $10 single, $15 couple. Please mail to Mrs. Jeannette A. Brown, Membership Secretary, Route 1, Box 8K6, Chatham, VA 24531, Phone: (804)-432-2807. Member gets membership card and "The Packet."
Packet the society's periodical publication.

Dues: $10 single, $15 couple per year. Dues include receiving the

1. Box 866, Chatham, VA 24531. Phone: (804) 432-2607.

Membership Form

PITTSYLVANIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This section is the quarterly publication of the Pittsylvania Historical Society for members and

those who are interested in the history of their family and the area in which they lived.

THE PACKET - Box 1206, Chatham, VA 24531.