COMMENTS BY THE PHS PRESIDENT

With this month of May, I am rounding out my third year as president of this historical society. It has been a rather pleasant experience, due in a large measure to the splendid support I have received from the associates in this volunteer undertaking.

I am thankful for the great support I get from the PHS officers ... who, like the Pan Am slogan "Make The Going Great" (especially for me as the president): Frances Hurt, guiding star as vice-president; Ivelle Saunders, our efficient treasurer; Jeannette Brown who keeps our membership roll in excellent order; and Susan Worley, capable journalist who is our new corresponding secretary.

I appreciate the support of our directors -- Norman Amos, Virginia Chapin, James "Mack" Doss, Alice Overbey and Catherine Overbey -- they fit right in with the Coca Cela slogan - "They Are The Real Thing"...real volunteers, that is!

I'm thankful to the support we get from Henry Mitchell, past PHS President, who prepares the mailing labels, and he and his wife Patricia are regular contributors to The Packet...and to Herman Melton, noted author and historian, for his literary contributions to The Packet. These volunteers remind me of the Dial soap ad..."They Care More, Don't You Wish Everyone Did."

I'm lucky to have Paula Irby Bryant to set the copy and do the paste-up for The Packet...and to have Tim Hillard and "Capt. Copy" to be the printers for this quarterly publication. Like the Hallmark cards say - "They Care Enough To Give The Very Best."

And to all of our members, I am most grateful! Like Pepsi -- "You've Got A Lot To Give."

---BY PBM

HISTORICAL FOODWAYS AT MAY 16 MEETING

Local foodwriter Patricia Mitchell, regular contributor to the pages of The Packet, will be our speaker for the PHS meeting on Monday, May 16 at 7:30 p.m.

Patricia, who initiated her foodwriting on the pages of the Community Standard magazine in New Orleans in 1974, began in 1986 to produce recipe booklets for her guests at the Sims Mitchell House Bed-and-Breakfast here in Chatham.

In 1988 she started publishing small books which describe food in specific periods of history. These books are used as interpretive materials at museums and historic sites. More than 200,000 of Patricia's books have been sold, and she has over 40 titles currently in print.

Patricia also will be a featured speaker at the annual Natchez (Mississippi) Literary Celebration in June.

Don't miss Patricia's program. Her subject will be "Southern Born and Southern Fed" in which she will tell about historical foodways here in the South.

The PHS meeting will be in the old 1813 Clerk's office back of the Town Hall.

Incidentally, Patricia's unique cookbooks will be offered for sale at the meeting, and she will autograph them for the purchasers.
One of Two in Virginia

Pittsylvania County (VA) has National Historic Landmark

By Herman Melton

The bronze plaque that has hung on the Pittsylvania County Courthouse since September 17, 1989 reads as follows:

"Pittsylvania County Courthouse has been designated a National Historic Landmark. This site possesses national significance in commemorating the history of the United States of America."

National Park Service 1987

Some with roots in Pittsylvania County may not realize what a remarkable designation this was. Only one other courthouse in the Commonwealth of Virginia has such a designation. Hanover County C.H. was given the designation earlier because it was the site of Patrick Henry's first public speech.

The writer hastens to add that that this was not the site of the "Give me liberty or give me death" speech. Instead, it is known as the "penny parsons" speech. Of greater historical significance is the designation for Pittsylvania's courthouse.

The honor was bestowed by the U.S. Constitutional Bicentennial Commission, chaired by retired Chief Justice Warren Burger, in 1987. The Commission chose only five buildings in the U.S. for National Historic Landmark designation. One of them was Pittsylvania's Courthouse. This enhances its historic importance since the five buildings were chosen because they were the sites of events important to the development of the U.S. Constitution.

What happened in Chatham that gave the County Courthouse its coveted historic distinction? The answers are simple but require considerable study if one is to understand the significance.

First of all, the Commission noted that the architectural integrity and appearance of the edifice has been assiduously, carefully and remarkably well preserved since the building's erection in 1853.

Secondly, a little known episode transpired there on March 13, 1879 that evolved into an event of profound historical significance - the arrest of the County Judge whose office was in the courthouse.

The warrant must have felt heavy in the hand of Deputy U.S. Marshall James C. Luck as he ascended the courthouse steps to arrest his lifelong friend Judge Doddridge Coles. Luck was born and reared near old Peyton'sburg, while the judge grew up at the Coles family plantation at "Elkhorn" near Java. Both were Confederate veterans and, ironically, both were in Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg.

The arrest was authorized in a bench warrant issued by Federal District Judge Alexander Rives of the Western District of Virginia in Danville. Coles was by no means the only county judge arrested. During March of that year, Judge Rives also issued bench warrants for the arrest of 13 other judges in the counties of
Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Botetourt, Buckingham, Campbell, Charlotte, Franklin, Fluvana, Henry, Nelson, Patrick and Roanoke.

They were all charged with violation of the "equal protection" clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1875 for excluding the names of black men from jury lists.

Judge Coles' arrest was of greater Constitutional significance since he was the only judge to take his case to the U.S. Supreme Court in Ex Parte Virginia (100 U.S. Otto, 339, 1880). In this landmark decision, the Court upheld the action of Judge Rives. Although Doddridge Coles lost his case by the Court's decision, when he came to trial a year later, his case was nol prossed.

Although some of the judges were tried, none were convicted, but it is assumed that all were soon in compliance with the civil rights statutes. Judge Rives had made his point, but stated during the proceedings that he was not seeking punitive action but compliance with existing laws.

Lest one jump to the conclusion that Judge Rives was a "Carpetbagger," it should be noted that he was a Virginia blueblood who was reared at palatial Oak Ridge in Nelson County, educated at Hampden-Sydney and was a graduate of the U. Va Law School.

The complete background and sequence of events are narrated in the manuscript of: "Equal Protection:" The Life and Times of Judge Alexander Rives, which will hopefully be published in soft cover by the writer in the Fall of 1994. Publishing plans will appear in future issues of The Packet.

Meanwhile, those with ties to Pittsylvania County can take a measure of pride in the knowledge that this courthouse was designated a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service because of a remarkable event that occurred there 115 years ago.

*****

DIFFERENT ROUTES FOR RESEARCH

A person doing research of an ancestry begins with a single individual and traces back in time to include the male and female line of that person's ancestors. When doing genealogy research, you begin with a single ancestor and trace forward in time to include all descendants to the present.

NOW IS THE TIME TO RENEW YOUR PHS MEMBERSHIP FOR 1994-95

Make $10 check payable to: PITTSYLVANIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mail to: Jeannette Brown
Route 1, Box 8K6, Chatham, VA 24531
Canister Shot From Yankee Gun Lands In Society Museum Display

By Henry H. Mitchell

Resting in a display case in the Pittsylvania Historical Society Museum is a 35 mm (1 3/8 inch) ball with a painful history. The shot hit a tree before lodging in the back of the thigh of Pvt. James Lafayette Oakes, Co. B, 38th Virginia Infantry, during an engagement at Chester Station, VA, on May 10, 1864.

The shot resulted in no broken bones for Oakes, so he was able to walk a considerable distance to the field hospital, during which time the ball moved significantly in his leg. Surgical removal of the ball left a long black scar which Oakes carried for the rest of his life.

James Lafayette Oakes was born on September 19, 1836 at Callands to James Washington and Evaline Oakes. He enlisted on August 14, 1862, into Company B ("Pittsylvania Vindicators") of the 38th Virginia Infantry, Pickett's Division, Longstreet's Corps.

After his injury at Chester Station, Oakes appears on the register of the Chimborazo Hospital No. 2 in Richmond, from which he was given 40 days' medical furlough on June 10. He is listed on the register of the CSA General Hospital in Danville on October 18, from where he was transferred on November 25 to the Pettigrew General Hospital No. 13 in Raleigh. He was paroled April 26, 1865 from a hospital in Thomasville, N.C.

Oakes returned to farming at Riceville and then at Chestnut Level. He had first married Mary Ann Elizabeth Gardner of Callands on January 31, 1860; their children were George (11/8/60), Laura (1/18/62, and married a Hamlett), and William Thomas (7/12/67). He then married Nannie Ellen Eddy of Boone's Mill on May 15, 1870; their children were Mary Evaline "Molly" (6/12/71, and married Moon), Eddie Lafayette (4/24/73), James David (12/244/74), Gillie Jane (9/28/78, and married Dalton), John Calvin (2/29/80); Belle Boyd (2/11/83 and married Ford); Walter Whittle (11/24/86); and Ernest Norman (1/17/90).

It can be speculated that James Oakes gave three of his children Civil War - inspired names: Belle Boyd from the famous Confederate spy; Walter Whittle probably from Lt. Col. Powhatan Whittle, commanding officer of the 38th from 1861 through Gettysburg; and Ernest Norman (by his own report) after a now-unidentified fellow soldier and friend of James.

James Lafayette Oakes died August 23,1920 at the age of 83, and is buried at Chestnut Level Baptist Church. He left the canister ball in the possession of his son Norman, who in turn gave it to his grand-nephew Terry Lee Oakes of Blairs (son of Woodrow, grandson of Walter, and great-grandson of James L. Oakes), who placed the ball on loan to the collection of the Rawley Martin Chapter UDC for display in the Pittsylvania Historical Society Museum.

*****

The ball may well have come from a hotly-contested "Napoleon gun posted on the (Richmond and Petersburg) turnpike (which) had annoyed us
very much," according to a report of the Chester Station battle by Brig. Gen. Seth M. Barton (who had succeeded Gen. Armistead as brigade commander after Armistead's death during Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg). Barton continued, "The rapid movement of the 9th and 38th prevented (the gun's) being carried off (by Union soldiers) and it was captured."

Major General Robert Ransom Jr. was displeased with the efficiency of Barton during the Chester Station action, and as a result relieved him of his command. In a letter requesting that Barton be restored to command and signed by 85 of Barton's officers, Capt. G.A. Martin of Co. I, 38th Virginia Infantry, stated that "when the enemy were driven from their gun (Gen. Barton) was the first to take possession of it."

During the Chester Station engagement, Gen. Ransom's troops clashed with "the forces of General Butler, United States Army, estimated at from twenty to thirty thousand strong, upon the Richmond and Petersburg turnpike" (in the words of Capt. George K. Griggs, who was promoted to commander of the 38th and colonel after Lt. Col. Joseph R. Cabell was killed in the engagement). Brig. Gen. Barton left the line of battle "about three minutes" (one of several complaints Ransom made against him) to request horses from Gen. Ransom for removal of the captured Napoleon gun. Barton reported, "Shortly after rejoining we were forced back beyond the gun, which again fell into the enemy's hands and was used...After a desultory fire of artillery on our new position, the enemy withdrew, leaving us the field."

The controversy between Brig. Gen. Barton of Virginia and his commanding officer Maj. Gen. Ransom of North Carolina prevented Barton from commanding his brigade again. Maj. Gen. Ransom was convinced that, because of Barton's perceived failure to carry out orders and make accurate reports during the Chester Station incident, "General Barton was not equal to a proper management of troops under the ordinary emergencies of battle." Ransom did admit that "Of his gallantry I have no question, as he was under fire all the time, and if injustice has been done him an investigation will prove it...My conclusions may be wrong, but I do not believe it."

Interestingly, on December 12, 1863, Bedford County native Sgt. Timothy E. Mitchell of Co. F, 8th Virginia Cavalry had written his wife Ardelia from his position "on picket near Rafaelville, TN," that "our Brigadier General (William E. "Grumbles" Jones) is a brave man and a gentleman, but I cannot say the same of Major General Ransom. He thinks nothing of shooting at his own men even for stopping for water."

Upon reading official reports of the Chester Station engagement, one might surmise that Ransom may have been unreasonably harsh on Barton and his troops, whereas Barton may have been reacting responsibly to battlefield conditions, including canister shot from the front and an attack on the left flank and rear of the 38th.

(Research provided by Terry L. Oakes, Route 1, Box 320, Blairs, VA 24527; Marie Oakes (Mrs. Joseph C., Sr.) Murphy, Route 1, Box 150, Blairs, VA 24527; and (T. Mitchell Letter) Mrs. W.E. Buford, 302 Cannon Lane, Taylors, SC 29687.)

*****

Success is getting what you want. Happiness is liking what you get.
Ancestry Research May Be Good For Your Health

Doing ancestry research may be good for your health, according to Carol Krause, author of "How Healthy Is Your Family Tree?"

She suggests when researching you might trace the patterns of emotions and coping methods of the members of your family tree to determine your family characteristics -- either good or bad. "You may see yourself reflected in those traits," Krause says.

Knowing the past medical history in your family tree could possibly save your life by perhaps changing your lifestyle to avoid or head-off the would-be problems that could be looming ahead - which therapists call "genograms."

KNOWN LOCATIONS OF THE GRAVES OF REVOLUTIONARY WAR SOLDIERS

The names and general locations in Pittsylvania County, VA are listed below of Revolutionary soldiers.

Robert Adams in Brights Community, Jacob Berger near Siloan Church at Toshes, Griffith Dickerson near Meadowood at Chalk Level, Edmond Fitzgerald near Shockoe, Joshua Stone at Hermosa near Mt. Airy, Thomas Carter between Concord and Weal.

Moses Hutchings two miles west of Dry Fork PO, Edward Robertson near Dry Fork, William Witcher west of Sandy Level PO, James Mitchell one mile east of Callands PO, Daniel Coleman and Stephen Coleman between Java and Riceville, Isaac Coles at Riddle Farm near Chalk Level.

Burwell Vaden in Chatham Cemetery, Samuel Callands northwest of Callands, Avery Mustain between Grena and Mt. Airy, John Buckley 3 1/2 miles east of Mt. Airy, David Hunt at Moorefield Farm near Renan, John Weatherford (minister, not soldier) at Shockoe Baptist Church.

*****

OLD TIME RECIPES FOR HARD TIMES

Hard Times Coffee: Mix 2 quarts wheat bran with 1 qt. yellow corn meal. Add 3 well beaten eggs and 1 cup sorghum. Spread in pan and put to dry in oven. Stir often as it browns.


(From Muskingum Gen. Society)

*****

HISTORICAL MARKERS ERECTED IN COUNTY

Pittsylvania County was one of 24 counties of 100 counties in Virginia to be authorized to erect new historical markers sponsored by the Pittsylvania Historical Society.
NAMES OF CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS TO BE LISTED ON COMPUTER

An article in the Seattle Times (July 1993) reported that the names of all Civil War soldiers will be listed on computer. The article read as follows:

Roger Kennedy, director of the National Park Service, poked at a computer keyboard Wednesday to write "E.F. Jemison" on a screen, beginning the monumental task of pouring into a database the name of every soldier in the Civil War.

The article goes on to state that The National Park Service is joining with The Civil War Trust, National Archives and private genealogical groups to put Civil War information onto computer disks. They will be entering over 3.5 million names, including information as to rank, company and side for each name entered. The target date for completion is 1996.

By 1996, with the hands of thousands of volunteers, a visitor at any of 28 national parks will be able to step up to a computer, type in a name and learn about an ancestor who once wore the blue or the gray during those terrible four years of the Civil War.

-From Conejo Valley Gen. Society, Thousand Oaks, CA

****

WHY KNOW THE PAST?

By Edward Woods

There are those who say, "Look forw'd, not back
For the past you cannot change
And hours you spend researching the past
Will profit you naught, and will mostly waste time
For what have you gained, as ancestry you track
And family histories you carefully arrange
For when research is done; the family tree complete at last
Your net worth is not improved, not by even a dime."

Au Contraire! For where in this world is the stone engraved
That says "Profit and Lucre, they must be the goals
Of every Endeavor, of all that we do
And toil without pay should never be taken"
For by preserving Family History, much more than money is saved
As much more than names and dates, the genealogy holds
And the written record becomes a bond, as though it were a glue
Binding generations together; a heritage not lightly shaken.

For you see, the knowing of our forebears
Is a stand-alone cause, with profit not measured in gold
And the discovery of Ancestral names and dates,
Their homes and accomplishments creates a legacy
To pass to our children, and afterwards they to theirs
A wealth of Heritage that cannot be bought or sold
And the greatest reward the genealogy relates
Is because I know my ancestry, I can therefore better know me.

-From Florida Gen. Society, Tampa, Fla.

****

Why didn't Noah just swat both flies?
Dan River Chapter Sons Of The American Revolution

Alan Shepard, America's first man in space, Jimmy Carter, former U.S. President, and such past luminaries as General of the Army Douglas McArthur and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill all have something in common with 19 area men. All have obtained membership in the National Society, Sons of the American Revolution.

This society consists of male descendants of those who served the cause of the Revolution in some way. The National Society, Sons of the American Revolution was chartered by Congress in 1906. The Dan River received its charter 17 September 1993 during Danville's Bicentennial year, and is affiliated with the Virginia Society SAR. Its members are from surrounding cities and counties in both Virginia and North Carolina. Others are from outside the region, including Maryland and Chesapeake, VA.

The purposes and goals of the Dan River chapter are patriotic, historical and educational reflecting those of the national society. The chapter recently honored a Revolutionary soldier, Lt. Thomas Jones with a graveside memorial service.

In May the chapter will honor John Weatherford, a Baptist minister, who was persecuted for preaching in colonial Virginia without a license.

Preserving the history of the Revolutionary period, and promoting an understanding of the basic instruments of freedom such as the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution are also part of the chapter's purpose.

Community activities include law enforcement awards and citizenship awards, and recognition to civil servants for outstanding service. Others include flag recognition, and observances of patriotic days.

Speakers to local schools, organizations and festivals are available on a limited basis.

The 1993-94 chapter officers are Larry Aaron, President; James Anderson, President-Elect; Arthur Miller, Jr., Treasurer; Raymond Ware, Secretary; A. Ray Griffin Jr., Registrar; Ken Colby, Curator/Historian; Dr. Fulton Neal, Surgeon; Tim Sanders III, Master-At-Arms; and Don Joyce, Alternate Chapter Representative.

Those desiring membership in the local chapter must be male, 18 years of age, and a lineal descendent of one who served the Revolutionary cause. Their contribution may have been actual military service, or patriotic in nature, such as serving in Congress, on Committees of Safety, taking the Oath of Allegiance, supplying the troops, etc.

A membership packet is available from Rev. Larry Aaron, President, Dan River Chapter, VASSAR; 185 Martindale Drive, Danville, VA 24541. Phone 804-792-8695. The chapter meets the third Saturday of the months September - May. Prospective members are invited to attend.

*****

COULD LOSE CITIZENSHIP

Congress enacted a law in 1907 that declared a woman, though born in the USA, would automatically lose her citizenship if she married an immigrant who was not yet a citizen. This law was repealed in 1922.
Herman Melton's Newest Book to be Released in '94

Herman Melton's newest publication, "Equal Protection," will be ready for release about mid-year.

This work by Pittsylvania County historian is the product of a 1988 grant from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and is expected to contain 150 pages (indexed, illustrated and with soft cover). It narrates the situations and events immediately preceding Ex Parte Virginia, a U.S. Supreme Court case that originated in Pittsylvania County in 1878.

The climax comes with the arrest of a Pittsylvania County Judge for violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1875.

Because of the subsequent Supreme Court case, the Pittsylvania County Courthouse has been designated a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service, making it one of only two courthouses in Virginia so designated.

VIRGINIA IS IMPORTANT TO WESTERN STATE RESEARCHERS

Mrs. Lonnie Crosby, noted Pittsylvania County genealogist, says Virginia records are important to family tree researchers of many western states.

She explains that western states were populated by migrants from the eastern part of the United States and Virginians were a big percentage of those migrants.

*****

HISTORY OF FOOTWEAR

You remember the old song, "All God's Children's Got Shoes, We're Gonna Walk All Over Heaven." Carl Graton of Elswoth, KS has some interesting tidbits about footwear. He says shoes were mentioned quite often in biblical times.

King Edward II, in 1324 is credited with the sizing of shoes. He decreed that three barleycorns placed end to end equaled an inch. The largest normal size at that time was size 13 (13 inches or 39 barleycorns). It was not until the time of our Civil War, however, that right and left shoes were introduced. Prior to that time, two identical shoes were made and could be worn on either foot. George and Martha Washington suffered much from shoes which did not take into account the length difference of the toes.

The big rage today are the rubber shoes that are pumped up.

*****

NO BIRTH CONTROL AMONG THE PIONEER FAMILIES

According to the history of the pioneer families, there was no birth control in those early days. Obviously because the family had the task of clearing the forests, sowing and reaping the crops by hand, children were a highly desirable potential asset.

There was roughly an average of 12 offspring per pioneer family - and some were inclined to overdo the production with as many as 24 children to a household.

*****
Summer Home at Eldon
Whatever Happened To Elegance?
The Social Life of Lizzie Swanson

By Patricia B. Mitchell

Elizabeth Lyons Swanson, wife of Virginia Governor and U.S. Senator Claude A. Swanson, is a local legend, having lived at Eldon, their summer home on Chalk Level Road near Chatham, where she "endeared herself to the people of the county by taking a large interest in community affairs."

Mrs. Swanson was a friendly, talkative Greta Garbo, if you can imagine; for "Lizzie" possessed classic beauty, charm, charisma, and that vanishing trait known as "elegance."

Do you know many "elegant" ladies these days -- ladies who wear boas and diamonds and entertain effortlessly and have a cordial yet reserved relationship with their domestic help?

Mrs. Swanson fits the description, a post-Victorian woman "widely known outside of Virginia through having served as hostess at many (Washington) social functions."

TRUE VIRGINIA CORDIALITY

She was thought to "look remarkably handsome" dressed in outfits such as "black net spangled with red and trimmed in red panne velvet." The agreeable Mrs. Swanson "with her true Virginia cordiality" was described as "one of the most popular members of official society at the national capital. ... she is a bright and cheerful little lady, and is a great favorite with the wives of congressmen. She is not a 'political woman' or a 'woman in politics' in any sense. She is just bright and cheerful, and makes everyone around her bright and cheerful. The net result of all this is that every Republican congressman's wife in Washington, without regard to the politics of 'hubby', (is) a zealous partisan of Mrs. Swanson's husband."

Another observer wrote, "The appointment of former Governor Claude A. Swanson to be United States Senator to succeed the late John W. Daniel of Virginia, is another step in the ambitious program marked out for him by his beautiful wife, to whom it is said he owes his political prominence almost entirely. She is a woman of rare personal charms and great popularity.

She virtually elected her husband to Congress, then she decided she wanted him to be governor of the Old Dominion, and he was accordingly elected. His term was marked with lavish social functions and the Governor's Mansion was the Mecca of all who wanted to shine in society.

The appointment to the United States Senate of the former Congressman and Governor gives Mrs. Swanson increased opportunities for greater social achievements, which she will lose no time to embrace. Like most men, the new Senator out-married himself by long odds, and it was a fortunate day for him when the minister pronounced them husband and wife till death do part."

LOVED HOME AND HEART

Was this female just another hard-driving Hillary-who-says-she-doesn't-bake-cookies? No, on the contrary, Elizabeth was a beauty who loved home and hearth and letting her man head the household (see "Eldon" in the Summer 1992 Packet). Yet, her charm and energy were abundant and
overflowed into social and cultural diversions after she had tended to house and family responsibilities.

As the able Mr. Swanson climbed up the political ladder, Mrs. Swanson worked to make sure the ladder rungs were strong and steady to insure his advancement.

*****

MRS. SWANSON HONORED

Thursday afternoon, between the hours of 3:30 and 6 o'clock, marked one of the most elegant entertainments of the season, when Mrs. John Pritchett Swanson was "At Home" in honor of Mrs. Claude Swanson, at her hospitable Danville home on Main Street. The interior of the house was most tastefully decorated for the occasion, the hall being a bower of yellow chrysanthemums, palms, ferns and here Mrs. James G. Penn, Mrs. William Averett and Mrs. Roscoe Anderson welcomed the guests and ushered them into the parlor, a perfect symphony in green and ivory tones, and with its decorations of pink chrysanthemums and evergreens; and amid the pink glow of shaded lamps here Mrs. Swanson, gowned in smoke eolian cloth, white chiffon and lace trimmings and diamonds, received her guests, assisted by Mrs. Claude A. Swanson, in a Parisian gown, black net, magenta, iridescent and cream lace over black silk and diamonds, and Mrs. Henry Swanson in soft white point d'esprit over silk and lace trimmings. The library, with its rich colorings of red, and artistically decorated with autumn leaves and white chrysanthemums, made a most attractive picture.

*****

MRS. SWANSON RECEIVES

Mrs. Claude A. Swanson will give a public reception to the veterans and visitors at the Executive mansion on Saturday evening from 9 to 11 o'clock. Festoons of electric lights will hang from the trees on the lawn, and the large 'Welcome' arch over the gateway will be fully illuminated in red and white. Within Confederate decorations and palms will be used.

Mrs. Swanson has asked the following ladies to receive: Miss Mary Custis Lee, daughter of General Robert E. Lee; Mrs. Thomas J. Jackson, widow of General W. H. F. Lee; Mrs. William Mahone, widow of General Mahone; Mrs. J.E. B. Stuart, widow of General Stuart; Mrs. J.R. Cooke, widow of General Cooke; Mrs. Lucy Lee Hill Macgill, daughter of General A.P. Hill; Miss Daisy Hampton, daughter of General Wade Hampton....

*****

MRS. SWANSON LOVED FLOWERS

Elizabeth was an artist's inspiration: "Mrs. Swanson appears on the canvas in an exquisite décolleté gown, which affords opportunity for a glimpse of her exquisitely rounded shoulder and arms. She wears a picture hat such as Gainesborough loved to paint and which is always associated with the portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire. In her well shaped hands she holds a single American beauty rose...."

Her love of flowers was a passion of long standing, as the following account demonstrates:

HE LOVED FLOWERS ALSO

"Senator Swanson fell in love with a pretty little 'town girl' in the town where he went to college. He had never cared much for girls up to that time, but she seemed to comprise all that was desirable, and he speedily arrived at
the logical conclusion that the oftener he called at her home the more he would see of her. One night two vases of cut flowers adorned the marble-topped table in her sitting room. She was enthusiastic over the bouquets and explained that 'some of the boys' had sent them. Yes, she said, in response to a question from him, she was exceedingly fond of flowers.

Now Swanson was working his way through college and was not going around in those days with lumps on his clothes because of the money in his pockets, but the next morning he had the town florist go up to the 'girl's' home and plant three or four beds of flowers out in the front yard at his expense. If she liked flowers, he did not intend to be any piker.

**WILLING TO WAIT**

"The little 'town girl' is his wife now. It was ten years before he felt that he could afford to marry, but she was willing to wait."

This marriage was a provident one. What sensible husband would not appreciate a wife who "possesses the charm of manner for which the daughters of the Old Dominion are famed?"

"Mrs. Swanson is of medium height, with a graceful, beautifully moulded figure, a wealth of waving fair hair, blue eyes and an exquisite complexion. She is cultivated and clever, and, better still, most affable and winning in her manners."

****

**DEATH ENDS ROMANCE IN 1920**

Mr. Swanson lost a lovely companion and supporter when Elizabeth died in 1920. As one reporter wrote, "Senator Swanson has always declared that whatever success he has attained in politics is due largely to Mrs. Swanson's active work during the various campaigns which elected him Congressman, Governor and finally, United States Senator." Swanson and thousands grieved her passing.

"Scores of telegrams were sent yesterday from Danville to Senator Claude Swanson, expressing sympathy with him in his bereavement...."

"The townspeople of Chatham, where Senator and Mrs. Swanson lived during the summer months, gathered and sent the following telegram to the Senate. 'We extend to you our sincere sympathy in your bereavement.' The telegram was signed by fully fifty people." — One hopes that there were armfuls of American Beauty roses on this elegant lady's coffin.

****

Note: The above quotations were selected from newspaper clippings of the era provided by Elizabeth Swanson's grand-nephew Charles C. Hall of Augusta, West Virginia -- To learn more about the romance of bygone days, read Patricia B. Mitchell's *Victorian Parlors and Victorian Tea Parties*, *Victorian Vacation Recipe Book*, and *Victorian Christmas Celebration Cookbook*, each available for $3 plus $2 shipping per order from Patricia B. Mitchell Foodways Publications, P.O. Box 429, Chatham, VA 24531.

Patricia is currently working on *Refreshments Now and Then*, as well as another book about teas. Anyone who would be willing to submit to Mrs. Mitchell (at the above address) material related to historical foodways is encouraged to do so, and will be credited if the information appears in print.

****
May 1994 Queries

(Free to members to aid others with similar interests.)

I'm looking for the ancestors of John HODGES, born in Pittsylvania County, VA 1754. He left VA and was in TN before 1800. In TN he married Sarah (Sallie) McCubbins. His children all born in TN were Barbara 1798, Elizabeth 1804, Allen 1807, Canada 1808, Louisa 1814, Polly 1822, William 1825. Write Sallie ELLIOTT, 3190 7th Street, Boulder CO 80304.

Seeking information about my husband's family from Pittsylvania County, VA. The names are Berntice Elbert WALKER, born White Oak Mountain, 1910, married to Flora Lee NORTON. James Cabell NORTON, born Pittsylvania County, 1886, married to Lillie Sue HAMLETT. Daniel Thomas SLAYTON, born Pittsylvania County, 1845, 38th Infantry Regiment-Company E, married to Margaret S. THOMPSON. I am also interested in where White Oak Mountain is located in Pittsylvania County. Please write to Denise S. SHINDLE, 503 16th Street, Virginia Beach, VA 23451.

Seeking any information on family of Henry JACOBS and wife, Mary (cir) 1760-70 who were from Bedford County, VA; their son, Aaron JACOBS 1798, born in Bedford County married Judith; Aaron's son William JACOBS who was born in Pittsylvania County, VA 1823 married (1) Mary KENNETT and (2) Betsy HUNT. William and Mary's son Lemuel JACOBS married Fannie SCRUGGS 1871 in Pittsylvania County. Any lead will be appreciated. Write Georgia LAUGHLIN, P.O. Box 20585, Roanoke, VA 24018.


Seeking information on Samuel WEATHERFORD born (c) 1810, married Jane RICKETTS Dec. 19, 1855. Their son AT WEATHERFORD born 1832, married Julia OAKS b. 1831, daughter of Edward and Amy (Adams) OAKS. James A. WEATHERFORD (son of AT) married Cora LEWIS. (Eliza Jane LEWIS b. 2-1845). All lived in Halifax or Pittsylvania County. Please write: Barbara Lewis GOLDMAN, 4309 Birch Avenue, Scottsbluff, NE 69361.

Seeking information on Jeremiah WARD, wife Anna ??? First record, Albemarle 1754. In Pittsylvania and Halifax early. Was said to be brother of Major John WARD who m. Ann Chiles. Jeremiah removed to Greenbrier, Kanawha, Cabell CO now W VA. Sons: Sanders, Jeremiah Jr. (m. Mary FLUQUA Greenup Co KY 1780), and Thomas. Daughter Agatha (m. Michael HOLLAND 1790 Pittsylvania County), Rebecca (m. Thomas BLEAKLY), Nancy (m William DYER), Rachael (m. Joel ESTES), Salley (m. Daniel WITCHER). Please write: Mary June FOULK, 405 Alleen Rd., Knoxville, TN 37920-5001.

(QUERIES -- CONTINUED)

Seeking information on the roots of Thomas LAZENBY II of Iredell County, NC and his wife, Lucy STIMSON, daughter of the Methodist Rev. Erasmus STIMSON (14 April 1762 - 3 October 1838) of Pittsylvania County, VA. Please write Jeremy WILLIAMS 744 Lexington, Charlottesville, VA 22902-4718. Phone 804-979-5730. Fax 804-979-6440.

*****

Assistance requested in gathering information concerning the ancestors of Allen CLAY, born about 1804, in either Pittsylvania of Halifax County. Married Paulina (other known spellings Perline, Polina, Liney) TALBOT about Dec. 1832. Information about an Allen CLAY appears for the first time in the 1840 and 1850 census for Halifax County, VA. Then again in the 1860 census, Pittsylvania County, VA. Please forward information to Darrell CLAY, 416th BSB. Unit 27933 (ATTN: DCA). APO AE 09222.

*****

Researching the family of William GREGORY, born Pittsylvania County, VA Feb. 8, 1776. The father of at least 25 children. William’s father also named William and was reported to be a Methodist minister. Write to Guy MCCONNELL, RR 4, Box 40, LaPlata, MO 63549.

*****

In the 1820 census there were 18 or 19 family heads living in Pittsylvania County with the surname SKELTON. In 1850, 1870 and 1880 there were none. Where did everyone go? Any information on the SKELTONs of Pittsylvania County is earnestly sought. Write Dr. Earl F. SKELTON, 6311 29th Place N.W., Washington, DC 20015-2221.

*****

Seeking information on Mahlon S. WILSON born 1802 in Virginia. Mahlon is an unusual first name and so were the names of his children - Aristarchus, Artamissa, Mary Eller, Mahlon Jacob, Augustus Templeman, and so on. The reason for the search in Pittsylvania is that a John WILSON had a daughter named Artimisia according to LDS record. Write to Terris C. HOWARD, 6535 Seaview NW 303B, Seattle, WA 98117.

*****

Appreciate any information on parents and ancestry of Charles ESTES/EASTIES/ etc. of possibly the Dan River area of Virginia or North Carolina. Charles was born ca. 1740-50 in Virginia; married ca. 1770’s in VA to Mary THAXTON; died after 1800 in Greenville Co., SC (arrived in SC in 1790s with family); children: Charles II, Obadiah, Zilpha, Joshua, Elizabeth, Mollie, Susan, Richard, Paschal, Reuben - all settled with father in SC. Possible Charles is descendant of Abraham ESTES who died 1720 in King & Queen County, VA. Contact Michael COOK, 9716 Irene Ave., California City, CA 93505.

*****

Seeking information on Captain Daniel HANKINS of Pittsylvania County (b. ca. 1700; d. 1797) who m. Elizabeth (???). Elizabeth m. (2) (?????) COLEMAN after the death of Daniel HANKINS. Am descended from Daniel’s son, William HANKINS, who served as a Captain in the Revolutionary War from VA. William was b. ca. 1750 - VA, d. 1823-24 - Pittsylvania; m. Elizabeth DAVIS (need marriage date and place). Who were Elizabeth’s parents? Mrs. Jean SHROYER, 6119 So. Blue Ct., Crystal Lake, IL 60014-4766.

*****

I would like to correspond with anyone researching the following families:


Seek information on Robert LOVE b. ca. 1770 (Pittsylvania?) VA, and his wife Easter BEAVERS b. 20 June 1770 in VA. She died 8 May, 1858 in KY. They had a son, Thomas Love b. June 1805 in VA. Write to Joan Snyder LOVE, 1708 Field Drive, Noblesville, IN 46060-1743.
On The Backside Of One Dollar Bill

What Do You Know About Great Seal of United States?

By Preston Moses

While sitting around just chatting I asked my friend, John, if he knew what is reflected by the Great Seal of the United States?

My friend replied, "I don't know" explaining "because I don't think I have ever seen the great seal."

I quickly reminded my friend that "yes, indeed, he had seen it many, many times." I told him to open his pocketbook and look on the back of a dollar bill, and to his surprise he saw the Great Seal imprinted there.

But I've found that my friend, John, isn't the only one who is unaware that the great seal is imprinted on the back of the one dollar bill although almost everyone knows the dollar greenback displays the picture of George Washington.

I went on to tell my friend that - symbolically, the seal reflects the beliefs and spiritual values of the founders, and not surprisingly, every element of the seal has its own symbolisms.

My friend wanted to know how the Great Seal was designed.

I explained that after the Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams were given the assignment of designing a great seal as the official emblem of the new nation.

Despite the illustriousness of the original committee, in true congressional fashion, it took six years, three different committees, several consultants and some arbitrary decisions by the Secretary of the Congress before the task of designing the Great Seal was completed.

September 16, 1994 marks the 212th anniversary of the Seal's first use (in 1782) on an official document of the United States.

Everything embodied in the Great Seal of the U.S. has a meaning, and at each stage of development of the design, contributions were made which remain today as seen in the seal imprinted on the back of a one dollar bill.

My friend asked me how I knew so much about the Great Seal - and I admitted that my information was obtained from an article written by the late Congressman Dan Dan (of my Fifth District, VA) which he prepared in connection with the USA Bicentennial Celebration.

My friend said he was interested in learning how the seal was designed - and its meaning. So I continued on with my display of borrowed knowledge of the Great Seal, as follows:

Three features recommended by the first committee were eventually adopted in
the final seal -- The Eye of Providence and the date of Independence (MDCCCLXXVI) appear on the reverse side, and the Latin motto, E PLURIBUS UNUM (Out of many, one) on the obverse. This first design was submitted on August 20, 1776, but the Congress tabled it.

It was four years later in March 1780, that the second committee was established. They, too, were unsuccessful in designing an acceptable seal, but contributed to the final design -- the 13 red and white stripes, and the constellation of 13 stars. They also added the olive branch, a symbol of peace.

The third committee was appointed in May of 1782. Rather than tackle the job themselves, they obtained the services of one William Barton of Philadelphia. Barton was a young lawyer with artistic skills and some knowledge of heraldry. His contribution was the eagle -- not the bald eagle we presently know, but the crested eagle, similar to that of Imperial Germany.

It finally fell to Charles Thompson, Secretary of the Congress, to take the work of the three committees and the various consultants they had utilized and work out what is basically the seal we now have. In the process he replaced the crested eagle with the native American bald eagle, and added a bundle of arrows to the eagle's left talon.

There are 13 arrows, 13 stripes and 13 stars in the constellation, representing the 13 original states. The olive branch and the bundle of arrows "denote the power of peace and war."

The reverse side has been called the spiritual side of the seal, and not without reason. It contains an unfinished pyramid which has Biblical connotations and which some take (thought it was never officially said) to indicate that the job of building the nation was not yet completed.

At its summit is the Eye of Providence, surrounded by rays of light, and above that is the Latin motto, Annuit Coeptis, (He has favored our undertakings). Along the lower part of the design is another Latin phrase: Novus Ordo Seclorum (A new order of the ages). And indeed it was. The world has never again been the same.

The first die was cut from brass in 1782, and since that time five additional ones have been made. There have been modifications -- the eagle is somewhat fatter, the shield more in proportion -- but there have been no major changes in 212 years.

The Great Seal of the United States is used between 2,000 and 3,000 times a year and each time it is impressed on a document, this nation once more makes a statement of its roots and its beliefs.

*****

FOR RESEARCH ABOUT METHODIST

Persons interested in records of the Methodist faith may like to know the United Methodist Archives for the entire country are stored at Drew University, P.O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940.

The United Methodist Church will do an initial search in their files at no cost if the ancestor was a minister. If located, you will be notified of photocopy cost. Send identifying information to General Commission on Archives and History, P.O. box 127, Madison, NJ 07940.

(From Florida Gen. Society, Box 18624, Tampa FL 33679)

*****

MAY IS THE TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP DUES IN THE PHS FOR 1994-95
MEMBERS WRITE LETTERS

I find The Packet very interesting. I will be glad to share results of my research of John Wilson because the name Wilson is difficult to research. If it had not been for excellent family records, I would not have come this far. Terris C. Howard, 6535 Seaview NW #3033 B Seattle, WA 98117.

Thank you for your prompt reply. I appreciate your offer of placing a query in your publication and giving the name of your researcher. Barbara Kynette, 1143 Judson, Evanston, IL 60202.

Thanks for your assistance. You will find enclosed my query, and it is short, clear and concise. I look forward to receiving mail from readers who may have knowledge of my particular Estes line. Michael Cook, 9716 Irene Ave., California City, CA 93505.

Enclosed is a $10 check for membership in the PHS. I look forward to my association with your historical society. Jeremy Bennett Williams, 744 Lexington, Charlottesville, VA 22902.

Thanks for your rapid reply to my letter and thanks for your offer of help. Barbara Goldman, 4309 Birch Avenue, Scottsbluff, NE 69361.

I am enclosing a query for your publication. I find the fun of genealogy in the search and the correspondence with some very nice people I have met through my efforts. In addition, sometimes I get lucky. I am about to finish a book on my mother's family (Douglas) which runs back to 1174 in Scotland. My wife and I are now working on the families of McConell, Young, Gregory, Shearer and Cole also of VA. Incidentally, I make Damascus knives, and no two are alike. The price range from $28 up. Guy McConell, (knifemaker) Rt. 4, Box 40, LaPlata, MO 63549.

The Pittsylvania Historical Society's The Packet helped me so much. You published a query for me in the winter edition. From this I received a warm encouragement from a person in Grand Junction, Colorado. Then came bountiful and fruitful information from Patricia Murphy in Savannah, GA. (who turned out to be a distant cousin). She was so helpful and will be supplying the missing link information to me about a Pittsylvania Co., VA marriage (early 1800s) of my ancestor, John Harvey to a daughter of Captain Richard E. Booker of Pittsylvania County, VA. I am joining the PHS now. I hope to help someone else through The Packet. William I. Booth Jr., 8530 North 59th Avenue, Apt. #56, Glendale, AZ 85302.

I wish you the best of luck in carrying on the "historical torch." Please accept this donation to the society. W. Conrad Stone MD, 4019 Lake Drive SW, Roanoke, VA 24018.

We are researching the families of Haley, Minter, Stultz and Gravely from Pittsylvania County and Henry County, VA. I am interested in joining your Historical Society so send me information on how to join. Mrs. Teddy Beaty Lindsey, P.O. Box 296, Dexter, NM 88230.
We are looking forward to our trip to Pittsylvania County and Shenandoah Valley researching our Murphy ancestors and the Bays. We are hopeful to be in your county at the time to attend your society's May meeting. George and Pat Murphy, 100599 Atherton Road, Rosedale, IN 47874.

Please enroll me as a member of your society. My g-g-g-grandfather William Madding (Mading) fought in the Revolutionary War from VA as did his brothers and was present at the surrender at Yorktown. The family was from Pittsylvania County, VA. Robert G. Dalby, 140 E. 54th Court #304 C, Merrillville, IN 46410.

---

SMITH/GREEN REUNION IN JULY

Reunion of descendants of Pryor Green and Cerena Holland; James Morton Green and Letitia Boatright Martin; William Warren Smith and Rosannah Susannah Keeling (family for whom Keeling, VA is named) will be held July 15, 16 and 17 at Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center, 10 miles north of Williamsburg, VA Exit 227 I-60, north on Route 30 to Barnes Rd. (601) 1 mile on Barnes Rd. to Center.

Contact Dorsey Green Smith Jr. for registration (904)-677-8243, 104 S. Beach St. Ormond Beach, FL 32174.

*****

THE WORLDWIDE BLANTON CONVENTION

All Blantons and kin are urged to attend the annual Worldwide Blanton Convention held this year Sept. 23, 24 and 25 at Days Inn in Cave City, KY. Genealogy Workshop Meetings are to be held all day Friday and Saturday, get together all nights and dinner at Mammoth Cave National Park picnic area on Sunday. For motel reservations call (502)-773-2151. Be sure to mention you belong to the Blanton Convention to receive our cut rates.

For more information contact Col. Rudolph D. Blanton, 111 Magnolia St., Upton, KY 42784 (502)-369-77763 or Col. Mary Louise Blanton Attal, 3510 E. Croft Circle, Spartanburg, SC 29302 (803)-582-8446.

*****

PHILLIPS FAMILY REUNION WILL BE IN GREENEVILLE, TN JULY 15-17

The Phillips Family reunion will be a memorable affair. The city of Greeneville, TN has officially declared July 15-17 as Phillips Reunion Day. The chamber of commerce will host a guided tour including the tailor shop and home of Andrew Johnson, 17th President of the US. For information, write Phillips' Family Genealogists, c/o Dale F. Phillips, 1927 South 7th Street, Chickasha, OK 73018. Phone (405)-224-6927 or call Roy Phillips (615)-428-0316.

"THE PACKET" -- Published by the
PITTYSYLVANIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Box 1206 -- Chatham, Virginia -- Phone (804) 432-5031
Preston B. Moses, President & Editor of "The Packet"

Frances Hurt, Vice President  Susan Worley, Corresponding Secy.
Ivelle Saunders, Treasurer  Jeannette Brown, Membership Secy.
Directors: Norman Amos, Virginia Chaplin, James "Mack" Doss, Alice Overbey and
Catherine Overbey

Membership Dues: $10 single, $15 couple. Please mail to Mrs. Jeannette A. Brown, Membership Secretary, Route 1, Box 8K6, Chatham, VA 24531, Phone: (804)-432-2607. Member gets membership card and "The Packet."
THE PACKET - Box 1206 - Chatham, VA 24531

THE PACKET is the quarterly publication of the Pittsylvania Historical Society for members and those who are interested in the history of their families and the area in which they lived.

PITTSYLVANIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

To order, write SUSAN WORLEY, Rt. 2, Box 223, Chatham, VA 24531

History of Pittsylvania County, Virginia by Maud Carter Clement. The history of the county, reprinted in hard cover. $24 postpaid.

Pittsylvania: Homes and People of the Past by Madalene Fitzgerald. Photos, descriptions of scores of homes, priceless notes about former owners. Hard cover. $20 postpaid.

Eighteenth Century Landmarks of Pittsylvania County, Virginia by Madalene Fitzgerald and Frances Hurt. Revised, completely indexed. Soft cover. $12 postpaid.

An Intimate History of the American Revolution in Pittsylvania County by Frances Hurt. Many little-known family stories, scores of surnames, roster of Pittsylvania soldiers. Soft cover. $14 postpaid.


Gray's Map of Chatham, Virginia 1788. Rare, full-color print, suitable for framing. Many names and features. $3.50 postpaid.


Pittsylvania Packet, Society periodical, free postpaid to members.

Books make perfect gifts!