

The Pittsylvania Packet

Summer 2003

Number 49



Pittsylvania Historical Society

Chatham, Virginia

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Notes from the Editor

For years, the *Pittsylvania Packet* has run genealogy queries free of charge for all members.

Quite frequently, society members have questions about when homes or other buildings were built; whether anyone has photographs of a building before a porch was added; what the gardens looked like when so-and-so owned the house, etc. We are now adding a query section for those who have questions about property.

I encourage all our readers to send in their property questions, as well as continuing to send in genealogy queries.

In other bits of news around the society, PHS board member Glenn Giles and his wife Pat were recently featured in an article on Dry Fork in a book called *Passing Gas: and Other Towns Along the American Highway* by Gary Gladstone. PHS board member Chris Smith and past PHS president Henry Mitchell co-authored an article on Pittsylvania's historic homes that was published in the May issue of *Evince* magazine.

All are invited to attend the Summer Picnic on July 21st, 2003 at 6:30 PM. Do not forget to buy your tickets beforehand. (See page 4 for more information.)

- Sarah E. Mitchell, Editor

Summer Meeting on July 21st: Picnic to Honor Veterans

The Pittsylvania Historical Society will hold its annual picnic Monday, July 21, 2003, at Ben and Betty Davenport's Banister Bend Farm, located in Markham. The picnic will feature music and films of oral histories including Clyde East and other county veterans. Tred Hunt will provide the BBQ.

At the picnic, which will begin at 6:30 p.m., the Society will honor military veterans in Pittsylvania County, who may attend free along with one spouse or guest. Print advertisements inviting veterans to attend will appear in the Star-Tribune and other outlets in July.

Admission to the picnic is \$5 for PHS members and \$7.50 for non-members. The Chamber of Commerce office in Chatham will sell tickets. For more information, contact the Society at 434-432-2790, or call Glenn Giles at 434-836-3252.

Saunders Family Plans Reunion August 2, 2003

The Saunders family originally came from Holland, settling first in Pennsylvania. Around 1730 William David Saunders came to Virginia. His son was Daniel Green Saunders, who was born in 1777, and lived in the Bedford County area. Among his descendants were William Robert Saunders (1850-1918) and Daniel Thomas Saunders (1844-1927), two brothers who married two sisters, Kizziah Pike English and Keron H. English. (Some of their descendants moved to Pittsylvania County.)

The descendants of those two couples will hold a reunion on Saturday, August 2, at 12 noon at Mt.

Ivy Christian Church at 5120 Scruggs Road (Route 616) in Franklin County, near Bernard's Landing at Smith Mountain Lake. Bring a dish to share. Drinks and paper products will be furnished. Contact Linda Yeatts Brown, 1713 Prodan Lane, Virginia Beach, VA 23453, 757-430-6789, lybrown@WHRO.net, or Anne Skelley, 540-774-6672, for further information.

Rotary Club Hosts Southside Saturday on September 20th, 2003

The Rotary Club is planning to expand their annual wine festival to "Southside Saturday," offering more events to appeal to a wider audience. Watch for more details in the *Star-Tribune*, closer to the date of the event.

Callands Festival Celebration on October 4th, 2003

The annual Callands Festival will be held on October 4th. This annual event always offers good food, good music, historical re-enactors, demonstrations, crafts for sale, and much more.

Historic Preservation Committee Accepts Nominations

The Historic Preservation Committee of the Pittsylvania Historical Society is seeking nominations for the annual award to be given to a person or business responsible for completing a preservation project in Pittsylvania County in 2002. Please contact Herman Melton at 434-432-2172 with your suggestions.

Interviewers, Interviewees Needed for Veterans History Project

History teacher and PHS board member Patrick Touart is collecting information on Pittsylvania County veterans from all wars. He is seeking volunteers to conduct interviews, and for veterans to come forward who are willing to be interviewed. If you are able to assist, please contact Patrick Touart, 509 Franklin Turnpike, Danville, VA 24540, 434-724-3752.

Pittsylvania County Heritage Book Seeks Writers

Walsworth Publishing is planning to publish a volume of stories on the heritage of Pittsylvania County. Contributions of articles containing 500 words, and one photograph or illustration will be published free of charge. (A fee of 10 cents per word over 500 words, and a fee of \$12.50 for each additional photograph after the first, will be charged.)

Each writer is asked to attach a separate sheet listing the full name of every individual named in the article, to make the job of compiling the index for the volume easier.

Authors of the articles will each receive one free copy of the book when it is published.

Please send your articles to Pittsylvania County Heritage Book, P.O. Box 185, Ringgold, VA 24586, or contact Anna Dodson, who is heading the project, at 434-822-6671 or at roganna@gamewood.net.

Civilian Conservation Corps Came to Life at Spring Meeting

by Chris Smith

Members and guests who attended the April meeting of the Pittsylvania Historical Society learned details of a “forgotten era in American life,” the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

Kenney Kirkman, president of the Patrick County Historical Society, and Desmond Kendrick, president of the Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society and archivist for Henry County, narrated slides and displays about the CCC. The two also are PHS members.

“The work of the CCC is one of the most overlooked events in U.S. history,” Kirkman said. “The CCC was nicknamed ‘Roosevelt’s Tree Army’ due to its reforestation work, but they also did soil conservation and highway and other construction.”

There were more than 4,500 CCC camps at the peak of the program, which was created by the federal government to provide jobs for men during the Great Depression. In Virginia, CCC workers helped develop Skyline Drive and the Blue Ridge Parkway, addressed flooding prevention needs, and built facilities at historic battlefields.

Several camps existed in Pittsylvania County. At Camp Casey, built at Hollywood, there were several distinct CCC companies during the period. Company 378 was the first in at the camp, followed by Company 4419 and Company 1371.

The first CCC camp was Camp Roosevelt near Luray, Virginia. Each camp housed 150 to 200 men, most 17 to 25 years old. Workers earned \$30 a month, of which \$25 was sent home to their

families. When they were not working, the men learned academic and vocational skills.

Kirkman and Kendrick encouraged people to look for additional information on the CCC at the website <http://www.cccalumni.org>.

**Karenhappach Norman Turner,
Dr. Benjamin Jones, and Drury Holland:
Revolutionary War Heroes
With Pittsylvania County Connections**

by Geri Castle McNerney

Karenhappach (several alternate spellings) Norman Turner, Dr. Benjamin Jones, and Drury Holland all have their names on memorials to heroes who helped win our country's independence.

Karenhappach Norman Turner

Isaac Norman and Frances Courtney gave their daughter, Karenhappach, the difficult Biblical name when she was born in 1733. Their other children bore the names Isaac, Frances, James, Joseph, Richard, Rosanna, and Isabel, who was the mother of Dr. Benjamin Jones.

Karenhappach Norman married James Turner and had raised her family prior to the Revolutionary War. A son joined up and was wounded at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. When word of this reached her she felt lucky that she had honed her nursing skills over the years. She packed her bag and rode to the side of her son (there are many legends as to how this was done). Karenhappach successfully arrived at her son's bedside and saved his life. Some

accounts say that she saved him by rigging up a method for dripping water from above into his wound. She saved lives of other wounded soldiers also.

At the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park near Greensboro, North Carolina, there is a statue of this woman who went far beyond the limits in place in 1782. The legend states, "She nursed sons and soldiers at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, North Carolina, 1782."

Dr. Benjamin Jones

Karenhappach's sister Isabel married Isaac Jones and their son Benjamin was born in 1752. He was at Valley Forge along with many other Virginia soldiers. His name appears on the Muster Roll at the Valley Forge National Memorial. He is listed as Private 1 VA Regiment, 5th VA Division, 1st Virginia Brigade, William Cunningham's Company. Monthly Status: May and June 1778 On Command.

Dr. Benjamin Jones' name also can be found on the Point Pleasant Battle Monument. (The West Virginia legislature in 1935 authorized the Point Pleasant Battle Monument Memorial to commemorate the battle which was fought on October 10, 1774.)

Benjamin Jones was called Doctor although proof that he trained to be a doctor has not been found by this researcher. Several of his sons did train at medical schools and practiced medicine.

Although Benjamin and his wife lived to their ripe old ages in Henry County, they have descendants in Pittsylvania County. Benjamin died at over 90 years of age while his wife, Elizabeth Reamy Jones, died in 1856 at age 100. The couple had eight children.

Drury Holland

Drury Holland's widow, Sarah Turner, applied for a pension at age 73 on October 28, 1839. Official records say he served for 5 years and 6 months. Her application stated she had often heard him speak of the many battles he was in and has seen the scars of several wounds received . . . from a bullet wound in the thigh, from a bayonet wound in the head . . . he was a considerable time under General Washington . . . he said he could always tell from Washington's deportment when a battle was expected or when any important move might take place . . . he was also under Generals Green and Morgan . . . he was at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse . . .

Drury Holland's name is also on the Valley Forge Muster Roll. He lived in Bedford County. However, his son Stephen lived and died in Pittsylvania County. Stephen Holland married Lucy David, daughter of Nancy Norton and Reverend William Davis, an early Pittsylvania County minister.

These three heroes are in the lineages of many Pittsylvania County folks including the author of this piece. Isabel Norman Jones is my 5th great-grandmother; and her son Benjamin Jones is my 4th great-grandfather. Drury Holland is my 4th great-grandfather.

About the Author: Geri Castle McNerney is a Pittsylvania Historical Society member from Phoenix, Arizona. Geri also notes that some members of the Martin and Keeling families are descended from the above-mentioned Revolutionary War heroes and heroine.

The Menaboni Mural at Chatham Hall

by Frances H. Hurt

The Menaboni mural is a work of art – depicting St. Francis standing in Pittsylvania County woods among Pittsylvania County wildflowers and local birds and critters. It was painted in 1955 by Athas Menaboni, a native of Italy who had attended the Royal Academy of Art in Florence. The work was commissioned by Dr. William Yardley, then rector of Chatham Hall.

The mural is seldom seen by visitors as it is on the wall of a classroom as a tribute to a much loved science teacher and bird lover, Lillian Hensleigh. The building, called Willis Hall, is now the school's advancement office.

Dr. Yardley himself contacted Athas and Sara Menaboni in November 1954 about the mural. He wrote, "We have been Menaboni's fans for years," and added that he had "thought about this in only rather vague and general terms. Our idea is that perhaps a very simple mural more or less two dimensional and conventionalized in concept, would be very beautiful.

"We picture foliage, branches, vines, etc., against a pale blue background, with various indigenous birds spotted here and there. An artist would grasp quickly, I suppose, the real possibilities of such an opportunity."

When St. Francis of Assisi was first proposed as a focal point for the mural, Dr. Yardley somewhat demurred, writing that here was already a St. Francis in the chapel. He added, "There is not much to spend, \$1000 to \$1500. I have no idea whether you would consider so modest a commission," but invited the Menabonis to visit Chatham Hall. They

did, and the deal was struck. The fee was \$1500 plus the cost of materials and travel, with the agreement that the mural might be painted in Atlanta, the Menabonis' home, then moved to Chatham Hall.

After Dr. Yardley received Menaboni's sketch of the proposed mural, he wrote the artist his approval. "Don't change the ducks and squirrels," he ordered, "and please keep that wonderful feeling you have around the tree roots like hands grasping the ground. I can't imagine a lovelier classroom. We think our girls are very lucky and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for creating such beauty." Nearly 50 years later, people are still enjoying the mural.

Uncommon Generosity: The Life and Times of a Pittsylvania Historical Society Benefactor

by Herman Melton

Landon Fuller was born into a family of above average achievers, a fact that partially explains why he was so inordinately successful. Tradition has it that his father, Louis Morrison Fuller, was a country doctor who maintained a large practice that encompassed Callands, Sandy Level, and Climax during the period that is known as the "horse and buggy days." Louis and Sallie Morrison Fuller had moved to Danville by the time that Landon Fuller was born on November 17, 1903.

Not much is known about his boyhood but it was evident that he was a bright youngster. His family sent him to Lynchburg College and he graduated with a bachelor's degree in English. From there he embarked on a remarkable career. Along the way he married Miss Marian Camper, but the couple had no children. They were affiliated with the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Danville during their lifetime.

It was during this era that Landon Fuller entered the teaching field at Whitmell Farm Life School under its principal, the remarkable Mrs. Archie Swanson Beverley. She became a nationally known educator who pioneered in developing advanced and innovative methods in preparing rural students for life socially, culturally, and academically.

Landon Fuller became deeply involved in Mrs. Beverley's remarkable program and saw the need for students to be more knowledgeable about the geography and economy of their home county. He had been working on his Master's Degree at the University of Virginia and joined with two other teachers, Viola Shorter and Mabel Fuller from Callands High School, who were also studying at UVA, to prepare a geography textbook supplement for Pittsylvania County.

After Landon Fuller, Viola Shorter, and Mabel Fuller spent a couple of summers working on the book, it was issued to Pittsylvania County School students in 1925. They were given financial assistance on the project from the then-superintendent of schools F. B. Watson Jr., the Pittsylvania County School Board, and the University of Virginia. (Mrs. Beverley's brother was the Honorable Claude Swanson, who at the time was a United States Senator and destined to become Secretary of the Navy under Franklin D. Roosevelt. It is certain that his influence helped further the project.)

There are many senior citizens in the county today who remember being issued the textbook when they were sixth grade students. Incidentally, a copy of this very interesting textbook is on file in the Pittsylvania County Public Library. The successful completion of this project would have been a source of much satisfaction to the energetic Mr. Fuller.

The next milestone in his life was reached when he completed work on his doctorate at the University of North Carolina. He moved on to the field of higher education and became a Professor of English at Virginia Tech. In addition to this success in the classroom, the University saw fit to make him Director of Admissions, a post he held for many years.

Dr. Fuller's interests were not confined to the academic world. He was a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, Phi Kappa Phi, and ODK. His interest in preserving the past led him into membership in the prestigious organization known as the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. He was a very active member and eventually served the organization as its president.

He retired at age sixty-five in 1967 and took up residence on the Franklin Turnpike in Danville. Later in life, the couple moved into Stratford House, a retirement facility in Danville. This distinguished educator departed this life on April 30, 1996, only three weeks after the passing of his devoted wife. Due to his astute managerial skills he left a substantial fortune that he bequeathed to nine organizations and institutions. Among them were Lynchburg College, Averett College (now University), Danville Community College, the Smithfield Center of Virginia Tech at Blacksburg, the Danville Historical Society, and the Pittsylvania Historical Society.

Thus, in the year 1996, the Pittsylvania Historical Society inherited one-ninth of an estate valued at \$938,000. As of August 1, 2002, that estate had increased to a valuation of \$1,134,000. The Pittsylvania Historical Society's share of this charitable trust had a net value of \$126,000 as of the same date. This holding has earned the Pittsylvania Historical Society's treasury from five

to seven thousand dollars annually for the past six years because of the uncommon generosity of Dr. Landon Fuller. Few Pittsylvania County citizens have achieved the greatness of Dr. Fuller and fewer still have been inclined to endow the historical societies in their birthplace upon their passing.

Landon Fuller:
Scuto Bonae voluntatis tuae coronasti nos!



“Cupids” Visit a Chatham Wedding

from *Tales About People in a Small Town*
by Langhorne Jones, Sr.

One of the most prominent and elaborate weddings ever held in Chatham was the marriage of Virginia Carter, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Lanier Carter, and Fontaine Scott of Lynchburg.

They were married in the Emmanuel Episcopal Church at Chatham and drew a very large attendance. The church was crowded and the night was clear.

Near the church and across the street lived Mr. and Mrs. Patton Coles and their two children Billy and Jordan, then very young. (Their house was later owned by Dr. Haile Fitzgerald, and then by Jack Holland.)

Mr. and Mrs. Coles, being friends of the Carter family, of course attended the wedding. Living near

the church they decided to leave the children at home alone while they attended the wedding as they would not be gone too long.

The family had discussed the wedding and the two young children knew where their father and mother were going. The boys were also familiar with the church.

After the two boys had fallen asleep, the father and mother left for the wedding. Soon thereafter the boys woke up. Knowing that their father and mother were gone, they decided to seek them at the church. They left the house in their night clothes and, en route, discarded their night clothes, leaving the boys completely naked.

They entered the church. As they opened the inside door to the sanctuary, the bride had just started down the aisle. The organ was playing "Here Comes The Bride," and everyone was standing.

The boys became very frightened and ran down the center aisle behind the bride, crying "Mama," "Mama." They looked like Cupids!

The boys were soon rescued, and Mama came, very embarrassed, and carried them home.

The main discussion after the wedding was the two naked children running into the church behind the bride.

Editor's Note: Tales About People in a Small Town by Langhorne Jones Sr. is a small volume of humorous stories about Chatham and Pittsylvania County residents. Copies may be purchased at Chatham Books on Main Street in Chatham. Special thanks to Langhorne Jones, Jr., for permission to use the anecdote.

Property Queries

Callands Courthouse

The Pittsylvania Historical Society is seeking photographs or of the Callands Courthouse before the 1960's and 1970's restoration, especially any that show clues regarding the original 1700's front porch and entrance.

Please send copies of photographs (do not send originals) to Pittsylvania Historical Society, Callands Courthouse Photographs, P. O. Box 1148, Chatham, VA 24531; or e-mail images to Editor Sarah E. Michell at sarahmitchell@vintagedesigns.com.

E. H. Fox and R. C. Saunders

In 1875, local attorney James M. Whittle contracted with R. C. Saunders for a house for his daughter, to be built “according to plats 1, 2, and 3, drawn by E. H. Fox.” E. H. Fox may have been a surveyor, or, more likely, an architect or draftsman. R. C. Saunders was already involved in the construction of Chatham’s first railway station. Further information regarding Fox and Saunders is sought by H. H. Mitchell, Box 429, Chatham, VA 24531, (findus@gamewood.net , 434-432-0595).

Deadline for Submissions

Please submit any announcements, articles, etc. for the next issue of *The Pittsylvania Packet* by the third week of September.

Books, Etc. For Sale

To order, send check or money order to: Susan Worley, 380 Greenbay Road, Chatham, Virginia 24531. All prices include postage.

Maud Carter Clement, *History of Pittsylvania County, Virginia*, reprinted in hardcover. \$24.00.

Maud Carter Clement, *War Recollections of the Confederate Veterans of Pittsylvania County, Virginia 1861 - 1865*, softcover. \$12.00.

Roger Dodson, *Footprints From the Old Survey Books*, softcover. \$12.00.

Madelene Fitzgerald, *Pittsylvania Homes and History of the Past*, hardcover. \$20.00

Madelene Fitzgerald and Frances Hurt, *Eighteenth Century Landmarks of Pittsylvania County, Virginia*, softcover. \$12.00

Frances Hurt, *An Intimate History of the American Revolution in Pittsylvania County*, Illustrated and Fully indexed, hardcover. \$17.00.

Kenyon McCann, *Ride Into Darkness*, Pittsylvania County's first historical novel based on actual 1840 mass murder. Softcover. 217 pages. \$12.50.

Kenyon McCann, *A Cruel Wind Blowing*, Author's sequel to *Ride into Darkness*. Historical novel set in Pittsylvania County. Softcover. \$13.50

Herman Melton, editor, *Old Fast & Perfect: Sketches from the 54 Year Life of the Franklin & Pittsylvania Railroad 1878 - 1932*. 28 pages, softcover. \$3.75

Herman Melton, *Pittsylvania County's Historic Courthouse: The Story Behind Ex Parte Virginia and the Making of a National Landmark*. Softcover, indexed, illustrated. \$13.00

Herman Melton, *Thirty-Nine Lashes Well Laid On*. 400 pages, Hardcover, indexed. \$24.00.

Herman Melton, *Picks, Tracks, and Bauteaux*. Hardcover. \$24.00

Mary Catherine Plaster, editor, *Idle Hens Don't Lay*. Historical Cookbook. Softcover, \$11.93

Gray's Map of Chatham, Virginia 1878. Rare, full color print, suitable for framing. Many names and features. \$3.50.