

The Pittsylvania Packet

Winter 2005

Number 55



Pittsylvania Historical Society
Chatham, Virginia

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President's Report

During the past few months your society has been extremely active. Thanks to Mack Doss and his staff, the 24th annual Callands Potpourri was very successful with many artists and craftspersons, reenactors and interpreters, and food vendors, with a large variety of delicious food. The estimated attendance was more than eight thousand persons. All of this on a beautiful day in October on the lovely grounds of the restored Clerk's Office and Courthouse at the original County Seat of Pittsylvania County. Anyone who missed this festival surely missed a wonderful experience.

On the third Monday of October the fall membership meeting was held in the restored 1813 Clerk's Office in Chatham. We were informed and entertained by Tom Perry of Ararat, Virginia. He presented a one hour slide program covering the life of J. E. B. Stuart and his last Civil War Battle at Yellow Tavern just north of Richmond, Virginia.

Plans are underway for the April membership meeting. The planned program is to be a bus trip to Greensboro with a tour of Blandwood, lunch, and a visit to the Greensboro Historical Museum. See more details on pp. 4 and 10.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all members of the Society that yearly dues are now payable. You have no doubt received a letter to this effect and I encourage each of you to respond as soon as possible. Membership dues support many of the functions of the Society and without them we could not continue publishing the Packet or fund other projects which need to be done to "Preserve Pittsylvania's Past".

- Langhorne Jones, Jr., President

Note from The Editor

The Historical Society would like to welcome Betty Camp to the board. She will be chairperson for the museum at the 1813 Clerk's Office.

- Sarah E. Mitchell

Winter Membership Meeting January 20th, 2005

(PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE, CHANGE OF LOCATION, AND CHANGE OF TIME).

The Pittsylvania Historical Society's January membership meeting will be held at 7:00 pm on Thursday, January 20th at Shadetree Rare Books at 26 South Main Street, Chatham, VA. The program will be by Steve Ausband of Averett University who will discuss and read from his book *Byrd's Line: A Natural History*. Ausband's book is about Col. William Byrd's trek through Pittsylvania County in the early 1700's. The event is being sponsored by Chatham Books.

Deadline for Submissions

Please submit any announcements, articles, etc. for the next issue of *The Pittsylvania Packet* by March 3rd, 2004. Queries and letters from our readers are always welcome!

"Pittsylvania Pilgrimage 2005" (Saturday, April 9th 8:45 am-5:00pm)

We are planning another Pilgrimage in Pursuit of Pittsylvania County's History by bus to Greensboro, North Carolina! This unique opportunity offers a relaxed pace to visit a variety of sites and enjoy a choice of stories from the 1700's to present-day restorations.

Our jaunt will begin with a visit to Blandwood, the home of John Motley Morehead (1798-1866), the acknowledged "Father of Modern North Carolina" who was Governor 1841-45. (He is one of three Governors born in Pittsylvania County and one of two who governed N.C.) We will separate into two groups with guides to tour his home (an early Italian Villa), the original kitchen which now also contains a gift shop, and the sunken rose garden.

Next we will eat lunch (Dutch treat) at the K&W Cafeteria.

Greensboro Historical Museum is our next destination. Governor Morehead's gravesite is within this complex which also encompasses two smaller homes (c. 1700 and c. 1800) with separate kitchen, blacksmith and woodworking shops, which were moved and reassembled at this site. The main museum building offers varied displays of interest such as artifacts from the Civil War era including several guns made in Chatham, Virginia, rooms on various historic topics (including copies of clothing and hats that belonged to Dolley Madison), displays of silver and clothing as well as Jugtown Pottery, memorabilia related to O. Henry, and historic photographs of the Greensboro area. These are just some of the many highlights to enjoy among the museum galleries. Tour guides will take us through the restorations, so we will divide into two groups for better viewing. After the tour we board the bus for the return to Chatham.

Tickets for the bus and tours are \$18 each and must be purchased in advance. Lunch will be your obligation. Tickets may be purchased by sending a check to:

PHS Bus Tour
Pittsylvania Historical Society
P.O. Box 1148
Chatham, VA 24531

Please direct questions to Langhorne Jones, Jr. (434-432-9261 or Mary Catherine Plaster (434-432-8945).

Board Member Mack Doss Honored

By Langhorne Jones, Jr.

The Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors has appointed James Mack Doss to the Board of Trustees of the Callands Clerk's Office to represent the interest of the Callands Community in the upkeep and preservation of the restored Clerk's Office building and grounds. This building was constructed in 1771 and served as the Pittsylvania County Clerk's Office until the county was divided again, in 1776, and the county seat moved to its present location at Chatham. After the move of the county seat the old Clerk's Office served a number of owners and usages and over the years fell into disrepair.

In 1966 this deteriorating building was given to the county by owners Clyde and Landon Oakes. Its grand history was recognized by the Chatham Garden Club which undertook and completed the restoration of the building and grounds. Now this delightful location, expanded through Oakes and Stegall family gifts to include the nearby early courthouse building, is the focal point of the Pittsylvania Historical Society's annual Callands Festival. Mack Doss, a member of the society's Board of Directors, has been the chairman and producer of the Festival for the past 24 years. Without his devotion to both the Clerk's Office and the Festival the society would be at a great loss. Congratulations to Mack Doss for accepting this honor.

Callands Clerk's Office is Historic Gem

By Mrs. Sam Hairston

It has been 38 years since the Oakes brothers — Clyde and Landon — of Callands donated the county's first public building and the land on which it stands back to the county. This beautiful little gem of a structure was showing signs of aging. It was easy to believe that it had stood out on that spot since 1771. With the county's bicentennial celebration approaching, awareness of, and interest in, history was peaking. Pittsylvania have always been interested in history and genealogy so that it was not hard to tweak their interest.

Mrs. Haile V. (Madelene) Fitzgerald, Chatham writer, historian and life-long resident of the county was just the person to spearhead the effort to restore the building. She obtained the enthusiastic support and sponsorship of the Chatham Garden Club. A committee was formed of Mrs. Robert Hopkins, Mrs. Langhorne Jones, Mrs. Vernon Lankford with Mrs. Fitzgerald chairman and Mrs. Girard Thompson as treasurer. Earl Allen, president of the Bank of Chatham agreed to be financial advisor. Many other members of the garden club took active roles.

This group then contracted Grayson Jacobs, chairmen of the Board of Supervisors, to see if the county would accept ownership as stipulated by the Oakes family and the responsibility of future major maintenance.

As soon as that was in place, the garden club began the task of raising the money for restoration. Their goal was \$10,000, which was met solely through private donors and businesses. Many donations came from former residents and descendants of Pittsylvanians. Wanted flyers (requesting money) went out with books about historic houses and places in the county and also

with invitations to the bicentennial. When the bicentennial celebration was over, remaining funds were donated to the restoration.

The garden club went ahead with plans in 1967 for the restoration. It was their policy only to contract for work when the money was in hand. Therefore at times it seemed to move slowly. The local newspapers, particularly the *Star-Tribune* with the help of editor Preston B. Moses, kept the public aware of the project and its progress. Two of the first donors were James Law of Chatham and J. Coates Carter of Martinsville, both architects who donated their services. Today the building contains a picture with the names of donors listed.

The Board of Supervisors gave \$3,000 to help with expenses. The sale of the book *18th-Century Landmarks*, by Madelene Fitzgerald and Frances Hurt (still available for sale; see p. 18) netted \$418.62 and the sale of note paper \$29.59.

After four years of painstaking authentic restoration, a celebration was held June 9, 1971 at the Clerk's Office. Mrs. Whitehead Motley, president of the Chatham Garden Club, presided. Vernon T. Lankford Sr., president of Hargrave Military Academy, gave the invocation. The crowd was treated to musical selections by the Gretna Drum and Fife Corps under the direction of Calvin Swart and John H. Martin.

Judge Langhorne Jones, Sr. introduced James Moody, Jr., executive director of the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission and the day's speaker. Mrs. Motley then recognized Clyde Oakes and Landon Oakes, donors of the property. Elliott McCormick, chairman of the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors, accepted the restored property for the county. At the close of the program the Chatham Garden Club treated guests to a party on the lawn.

Nowadays, the property is the scene each year of the Callands Fall Festival sponsored by the Pittsylvania Historical Society. School groups are welcomed for tours and the building can be opened for special meetings upon request.

The county maintains the property and it is administered by a Board of Trustees — one from the Oakes family; originally two from the Callands Women's Club (Mrs. G.T. Farthing Jr. and Mrs. Earl Snyder), now filled by Virginia Chapin of Callands; and two from the Chatham Garden Club. At present these are Mrs. Ben Davenport Jr. and Mrs. Sam Hairston. In addition, James Mack Doss has just been named to the board.

*Editor's note: Special thanks to the **Star-Tribune** for sharing this article with our readers.*

Blandwood

By Sarah E. Mitchell

In conjunction with the planned spring tour to Blandwood, we are running this article on the house and its historical connections.

The Governor

John Motley Morehead was born in Pittsylvania County in 1796. He moved to North Carolina at a very young age, and went on to become a lawyer and then governor. As one of the leading men in antebellum North Carolina, he pushed for improvements and advancement to that state. He died in 1866.

The Architect

Alexander Jackson Davis was a New York-based architect who had a flourishing practice

starting in the late 1820's. Famed for his work in Greek Revival and the Gothic, Italian, and other early Victorian styles, he published his own book of building plans and worked with Andrew Jackson Downing on his many books. Alexander Jackson Davis designed many public and private buildings and churches in Virginia (including parts of VMI) and North Carolina; he is credited with designing at least one Pittsylvania County house, Sharswood, a lovely Gothic at Mount Airy.

The House

The Morehead family was living in an older home (1790, with additions from the 1820's) when in 1844 Alexander Jackson Davis was hired to draw up plans to expand the home. Davis' plan was to add in front of the older home an almost-symmetrical Italian Villa (one of the first built in the U. S.) with two flanking out-buildings (one was the kitchen, the other an office). The newer addition features a bay window, a lovely medallion on the front hall ceiling, and is now furnished with early Victorian items. The older section remains; one can see some of the differences in building styles as one moves through the home.

Editor's Note: A longer version of this story with bibliography can be found at <http://www.vintagedesigns.com/aa/ajd01/index.htm>.

Mysterious Millner Imprisoned in New York

By Sarah E. Mitchell

J. K. Millner, a “speculator and man of means” of Danville, was arrested in New York on September 10, 1861, and charged with having one thousand sheets of bills lithographed (printed) for the Bank of Pittsylvania in Chatham, Virginia at the cost of \$135.00, and being caught in the act of entering into

a contract to buy gun-making machinery, hire men to operate the machinery, and transport the machinery and men to Virginia. In the "sting," Bethel Burton, who invented the patent rifle and sold the patent to Millner; Robert Walker, who allegedly was going to help transport the operation; and Benjamin F. Corlies, who was a partner in the company that printed the money, were all arrested. Robert Murray, U. S. marshal, gave his account of the situation:

"I am the marshal of the southern district of New York. I arrested J. K. Millner who is now in Fort Lafayette; he stated to me that he was a Virginian; that he came on here some three weeks previous; that he was introduced to Bethel Burton by a Mr. Walker (these men are now in Fort Lafayette). Walker stated to him (Millner) that Burton was the inventor of a patent rifle or gun which was a very effective weapon; that if they could introduce it into Virginia they would make a large sum of money. After negotiation Burton went down to Virginia with Millner to see what arrangements could be made with the leaders of the rebellion. They took one of the guns with them — taken apart and packed in their baggage. They saw at Richmond the Confederate Government with which they made a contract to make 40,000 of the rifles at a stated price.

"Burton and Millner then returned to New York to get the machinery and workmen to manufacture the guns and ship them to Virginia by the way of Hatteras Inlet, the capture of which disconcerted their plans. So far this is the statement of Millner. When I arrested Millner he was in the act of paying \$15,000 to Burton for an interest in the gun and contract. I arrested Millner on a warrant issued by a U. S. commissioner, a copy of which is appended. After the arrest of Millner on inquiry I found quite a number of men who had been hired by

Millner and Burton to go on to Virginia. They were mechanics such as would be employed on such work.

“With one of these men was found the paper money, a sample of which is annexed. Millner admitted that he had ordered this paper money made. . . .

“To Mr. Walker’s place of business I traced George Miles [a Richmond man who was charged with “collecting moneys in loyal States for persons residing in the insurrectionary States”] and [John Garnett] Guthrey [a Petersburg man who was charged with “holding unlawful intercourse with persons in insurrectionary States”] and they were coming from there when they were arrested. We found here \$30,000 of Mr. Millner’s money which he offered to the officers if they would let him go and take his paper money with him. He also offered it to me on same conditions.”

S. C. Hawley, a Chief Clerk in New York, described his view of the alleged crimes to William H. Seward, Secretary of State:

*“The testimony shows that Millner and Bethel [Burton] are **particeps criminis**, engaged in the same transaction; the testimony relates to both. I therefore make one report for both cases. . . . I think it is shown that Burton was the inventor of a new implement of war in the character of a rifle; that Millner was a speculator with means; that they put their heads together, went to Richmond and contracted with the military authorities in command of the armies now making war against the Government to supply them with 40,000 or 50,000 of the rifles; and that they were arrested here in New York while making preparations for performing their contract. They had not only intended and agreed to do this thing but had taken steps and*

done overt acts, such as engaging machinery and hiring men to manufacture the guns. All this can be amply and clearly proved I do not doubt. I therefore do not doubt that J. K. Millner and Bethel Burton have committed an offense against the United States for which they can be legally held and punished.

“I will add that in this case as in many others the mercenary and not the political motive preponderated in inducing the acts of the parties, and also that the men are men of talents, enterprise and courage, well calculated and very likely to pursue money-making schemes regardless of law and patriotism.

“I do not notice the matter of the paper money because one good reason for holding the men prisoners is enough; and further because I think that the uttering of the money was probably to have occurred at the South as a private speculation, in no way calculated to injure the United States Government or to aid the States or people who are engaged in rebellion. Punishment for that crime ought probably to proceed from the States where the money should be put in circulation. [B. F. Corlies, who co-owned the printing company that lithographed the money, was released after swearing an oath of allegiance on September 18th, 1861.]”

Protests of Innocence

Mr. Millner, of course, disputed all these claims and argued that he was a loyal Union supporter:

*FORT LAFAYETTE, September 21, 1861.
Hon. W. H. SEWARD, Secretary of State,
Washington.*

DEAR SIR: I wish for you to give me written permission to send to Virginia for my wife as I

am confined here and do not know when I will be able to get out, and in case that I get my release (which I am sure that I would get if I could see you) I would prefer remaining in New York until the war is over. I can employ a man to go to Virginia for my wife if you will give the permission and give me a chance to see the parties.

In regard to my money that the Government has libeled here in the city of New York it has been there ever since before the proclamation of the 15th of April issued by the President, and I have not taken it home for the reason that I believed it was safer here than at home and never had any idea of moving it until I got afraid of having it confiscated. And so far as the rebellion is concerned I have never taken any hand in it in any way, as I voted for Union men for my State convention, and when the ordinance of secession was voted on by the people I left home for the reason that I could not vote for it and was afraid to vote against it.

I have been here in this fort for some ten days, and if you would give me a chance I could prove to your entire satisfaction that I have neither committed treason nor intended any. If you will order a deputy marshal to convey me to Washington I will pay all of his expenses and my own and also his salary during the time, and I will guarantee if you will see me that you will order my release.

Hoping that you will comply with some of my request, I remain, yours, respectfully,

J. K. MILLNER, - Formerly of Danville, Va.

P.S.— You will please not publish anything in this letter. J. K. M.

A few months later, Mr. Millner wrote President Lincoln. (In the meantime, he had hired

lawyer William H. Ludlow and written again to Seward.)

FORT WARREN, Boston Harbor, December 30, 1861.

*His Excellency ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
President of the United States, Washington.*

SIR: I was arrested in New York on September 10, 1861, by Marshal Murray acting under orders received from the Department of State and have been confined since that time in Forts Lafayette and Warren, the latter being my present place of confinement. Since my arrest suits have been instituted in the courts of New York against me amounting to over \$30,000, which amount I have on deposit there and has been there since April 1, 1861. The object of the suits is the confiscation of my property. My object in writing to Your Excellency is that I may be allowed my liberty to attend the said suits upon such terms as you may designate. Although a native of Virginia my property is in New York. I have therefore no desire to go South. I only ask to be permitted to defend my property in suit. Evil-disposed persons, my enemies, are endeavoring to have my property confiscated whilst I am here, well knowing were I at liberty they could not accomplish their designs. I am willing to enter into any obligation the Government may require of me.

Hoping this matter will receive your speedy attention I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

J. K. MILLNER.

Free at last

J. K. Millner had written to Seward on October 24, 1861, "I am a Union man and voted in Virginia

against my own uncle who was a secession candidate. I have never been engaged in intentional treasonable acts against the United States Government, and have never conveyed any political or military intelligence or intelligence of any other kind detrimental to the Government of the United States. I am willing to give the same parole as that given by Mr. Guthrey, of Virginia” The following year, Millner was finally allowed to take the oath:

MAY 7, 1862.

I, J. K. Millner, of Danville, Va., do hereby give my parole of honor that I will render no aid or comfort to the enemies in hostility to the Government of the United States and that I will not go into any of the States in armed insurrection against the authority of the Government of the United States nor correspond with persons residing therein without permission from the Secretary of War.

J. K. MILLNER.

*Signed in the presence of—
E. D. WEBSTER,
Secretary.*

What happened next?

It is not perfectly clear whether J. K. Millner returned to Virginia. On the 1870 and 1880 census, there are a few individuals by the name of J—Millner (Jackson, John, etc.) in Danville and Pittsylvania County, but it is not definite that any of these men were the same individual. A J. K. Millner is credited with helping to start land development in 1875 in the area that became North Danville, and area historian Danny Ricketts notes that there was a John K. Milner (with only one “l”) living on Belle View Street in North Danville in 1879.

Bibliography: United States War Dept., United States Record and Pension Office, United States War Records Office., et al., *The war of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies. Series 2 - Volume 2*, Gov. Printing Office, 1897, pp. 149, 285, 749 - 766; United States Department of the Interior, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: North Danville Historic District, Pittsylvania County, Virginia*, Section No. 7, p. 4; correspondence of Henry Mitchell via email with Danny Ricketts.

Genealogy Query

My mother, Edith Riddle, married Willie Anderson. I am working on the Anderson family tree. In 1813 Thomas Benjamin Anderson qualified as a doctor (Pittsylvania County Court Order Book 16, page 1). I have deeds of cases he handled in Pittsylvania County. I wonder if the Andersons in Pittsylvania County are related to my family. I have information on the Anderson Double House in Peytonsburg which I am checking on. If you have any Anderson information please contact me at:

Paula Rousselle
11725 Heathmere Crescent
Midlothian, Va.23113
804-379-3847

Pittsylvania Historical Society Books

The Historical Society books are currently available for purchase from the following retailers. Suggested retail prices do not include shipping, handling, or tax.

Chatham Books, 10 North Main Street, P. O. Box 71,
Chatham, VA 24531, 434-432-2488,
chathambooks@gamewood.net

Mitchells Publications, P. O. Box 429, Chatham, VA 24531,
434-432-0595, 1-800-967-2867, answers@foodhistory.com,
<http://www.MitchellsPublications.com>

Shadetree Rare Books, P. O. Box 994, Chatham Antique
Gallery, Chatham, VA 24531, 434-432-1400
hhurt@adelphia.net, <http://www.ShadetreeRareBooks.com>

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Maud Carter Clement, *History of Pittsylvania County*
(Hardcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$22.

Madelene Fitzgerald, *Pittsylvania Homes and History of the
Past* (Hardcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$18.

Roger Dodson, *Footprints from the Old Survey Books*
(Softcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$11.

Madelene Fitzgerald and Frances Hallam Hurt, *18th Century
Landmarks of Pittsylvania County, Virginia* (Softcover)
Suggested Retail Price: \$11.

Gray's *Map of Chatham, Virginia 1878* (Frameable Map)
Suggested Retail Price: \$3.

Frances Hallam Hurt, *An Intimate History of the American
Revolution in Pittsylvania County, Virginia* (Hardcover)
Suggested Retail Price: \$15.

Herman Melton, *Pittsylvania County's Historic Courthouse:
The Story Behind Ex Parte Virginia and the Making of a
National Landmark* (Softcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$11.

Herman Melton, *Pittsylvania's Eighteenth-Century Grist
Mills* (Hardcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$23.

Herman Melton, *Pittsylvania's Nineteenth-Century Grist
Mills* (Hardcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$23.

Herman Melton, *Thirty-Nine Lashes Well Laid On: Crime
and Punishment in Southside Virginia 1750—1950*
(Hardcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$22.

Judge Langhorne Jones, *Tales from a Small Town*
(Softcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$5.