

The Pittsylvania Packet

Winter 2006

Number 59



Pittsylvania Historical Society

Chatham, Virginia

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President's Report

As the outgoing president of the Pittsylvania Historical Society I would like to express my thanks to all who have helped make my job interesting, enjoyable, and easier than expected. I feel the Society has moved forward in all our endeavors and we can say we are living up to our mission of "Preserving Pittsylvania's Past." I hope each of you feels that the work of the Society continues to be beneficial and worthwhile to future generations.

There has been much diligent and often frustrating work going on behind the scenes on the restoration of the Chatham Train Station but despite all the stumbling blocks progress is being made. Visible progress will soon be evident.

The Society's Museum, in the 1813 Clerk's Office in Chatham, has grown in both artifacts and eye appeal and has been open to the public at every opportunity.

The highlight of the year's activity always comes with the Callands Festival. This year we held our 25th festival at the restored first Clerk's Office of Pittsylvania County at present day Callands. There were crafts, food and reenactments enjoyed by 10,000 or more people. If you missed this one make plans now for next year.

I also would remind you the time has arrived to renew your membership and encourage others to join our Society. Check out the centerfold in this issue of the *Packet*. You make all our activities possible.

Please support our new President, Kenyon Scott, and Vice President, Mary Catherine Plaster, in their endeavors. Let them know your concerns, suggestions, and ideas on how to make the Pittsylvania Historical Society even better for all.

Langhorne Jones, Jr.

Blue Means do NOT Renew!

If you see a light blue dot on your address label, you do not need to renew your membership. Otherwise, please do renew promptly.

As long-time members may remember, the society has traditionally sent out renewal letters. In order to save money on the ever-rising costs of postage, the society decided to send out the renewal notices in the *Packet* this year.

The PHS thanks all of our wonderful members for their support!

**Pittsylvania Historical Society Membership
Meeting
Monday Evening, January 16th, 2006
7:30pm**

Dr. Jay Irby Hayes will be the guest at the Winter meeting. He will speak on the writing of his book, *Dan Daniel and the Persistence of Conservatism in Virginia*.

Dr. Hayes is a Chatham native. He is now a writer and historian on the staff at Averett University in Danville, Virginia.

The meeting will be held on January 16th at 7:30 PM at the 1813 Clerk's Office behind Town Hall in Chatham.

**Winter Encampment at the
Danville Museum of Fine Arts & History
March 4, 2006**

A Winter Encampment will be held on March 4, 2006 on the lawn at the Sutherlin Mansion in Danville. (The museum periodically holds Civil War encampments; contact the museum at 434-793-5644 for further details.)

The Danville Museum is currently displaying a recently-received treasure: Annie Josephine "Josie" Williams' wedding dress, worn when she married Stephen John Davis in 1894 (the brown silk dress was donated by Stephen and Josie's granddaughter, Nancy Toon). Josie was the daughter of Dr. Edward P. Williams and his wife Mary Elizabeth, whose family lived in Malmaison in Pittsylvania County.

Deadline for Submissions

Please submit any announcements, articles, etc. for the next issue of *The Pittsylvania Packet* by March 1st, 2006. Queries and articles are always welcome!

Bus Tour Provided Glimpse of County's History

by Susan Worley

The Pittsylvania Historical Society hosted a bus tour on September 10th to some of the county's earliest settlements.

The route included the Giles Rock House west of Chatham, Col. William Ramsey's Graveyard, Col. William Ramsey's House, and the Harmon-Cook House at Cooksburg.

The bus, which left Chatham early in the morning, stopped at Camp Pitt near Climax for a break around mid-morning before continuing on to Little Cherry-stone.

Then, the travelers stopped, for perhaps the highlight of the tour, which was lunch at the restored Chalk Level cabin of Judy and Fuller Motley, who organized and hosted a delightful meal. After lunch the tour visited Meadow Wood, the Dickinson-Barksdale House on Hickey's Road, the Mustain-Whitehead-Berger House, and Brown's Tavern.

The return trip to Chatham passed by Yates Tavern south of Gretna.

The trip was organized by Fuller Motley and Glenn Giles. Glenn produced a booklet to provide historical information about the places visited. Fuller was tour guide and provided color commentary aboard the bus.

A Bit of Pittsylvania Poetry

Introduction by Sarah E. Mitchell

*The poem reprinted below was written by “L. of Pittsylvania” in the 1830’s. The poem was among a few written by him that were published in some of the early issues of the **Southern Literary Messenger** (they ran shortly before Edgar Allen Poe became an editor for the magazine).*

I have not been able to find any clue of who “L.” was — if anyone knows, please share the information! (Of course, the Pittsylvania referred to could be a plantation called Pittsylvania, or another town or county by the same name, but I am not familiar with another Pittsylvania that was in existence at the time.)

To * * * * *

Believe not that my heart is cold,
And feels not friendship’s sacred fire,
If I sometimes myself withhold,
And from thy festive scenes retire.

Oh, no! I love the social bower
Where friendship smiles with joyous mirth,
And yet to me there is an hour
More dear than all those scenes on earth.

’Tis when in pensive mood, the mind,
Retires within itself to muse,
And some bright dream, long since resigned,
With sad though pleasing thought reviews;

Some golden dream of early years,
When all the heart was warm and true;
And life, unshaded yet with cares,
Displayed its best and brightest hue.

'Twas then I dreamed of faithful love,
That would o'er time and change prevail —
Fond, fairy scenes of pleasure wove —
Bright, verdant spots in life's dark vale.

But time advanced, and at one sweep
My air-built castles tore away;
And, like a wreck upon the deep,
My shattered hopes and prospects lay.

Upon life's ocean still I'm tossed;
And tho' the skies are sometimes bright,
Yet on the waves again I'm lost,
Midst howling storms and pitchy night.

Believe not then my heart is cold,
And feels not friendship's sacred fire,
If I sometimes myself withhold,
And from thy festive scenes retire.

By L. of Pittsylvania

*From the Southern Literary Messenger, Volume 1,
Issue 2, November 1834, p. 101 (appears courtesy the
University of Michigan, Making of America project).*

Have You Worn a Chicken Lately?

by Frances Hallam Hurt

The pleasure associated with a hearty chicken dinner is quite enough for even a choosy diner. But not for the late Mrs. Maurice [Sally Whitehead] Fitzgerald of the Chalk Level Road in Pittsylvania County. She wore them, too!

Known to her friends as an artistic soul, and an inventive one, Miss Sally was forever astounding her bridge partners and neighbors with unique head-dresses. They thought they were accustomed to surprises, though, until the day of the chicken.

A pert young pullet caught the eye of Mrs. Fitzgerald one day as it shimmered with iridescent colors in the barnyard sunlight. Its black feathers reflected shades of gold and green that reminded Miss Sally of a chic hat that she had always coveted. Alas, for the pullet!

Sunday dinner that week was the usual toothsome treat, but that was not the end of the chicken story. Its skin, feathers and all, became the subject of the tried-and-true steam-and-stew pot treatment.

Cleaned and dried, manipulated and softened, preserved with borax and alum, the creation then was steamed into pliability and fitted over a certain stew pot that happily was exactly Miss Sally's hat size. Then, attached to a venerable black felt crown that was a veteran of many efforts at high style, the creation met the admiring glances of the neighborhood.

There followed a number of headdresses for which a like number of barnyard residents paid dearly. One masterpiece involved an assortment of flowers topped by a real butterfly. This insect had carefully been protected by a coat of clear nail polish.

Aside from hats that amused and filled with awe, Mrs. Fitzgerald turned her hand to quilts and comforts that graced her pleasant home. She refinished antique furniture. Her life was happy, amusing, and fulfilling.

*From **The Quill Pen** (the forerunner of **The Pittsylvania Packet**), Issue VI, August 1983.*

Abraham Chaney and his Revolutionary War Service

Contributed by Maud Carter Clement

*Mrs. N. E. Clement Jr. (Maud Carter) submitted the following to **The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography**, who published it in 1917 (in their Vol. XXV). It is reprinted here with the irregular punctuation and capitalization of the original.*

On this 22nd day of August, 1832, Personally appeared in open court before Dan'l Coleman, Jas. Logan, David H. Clark & Wm. D. Pannill, the court of Pitts. now sitting, Abraham Chaney a resident of said county, aged 72 yrs. and made following declaration of his oath —

That he entered the service of the U. S. as a Volunteer Soldier in a company of Militia commanded by Capt. Donaldson, jr., Lieut. Moses Hutchings & Ensign Joseph Williams, & marched from the County of Pittsylvania on the 9th day of April 1776 and went thro Franklin Co., crossed the Blue Ridge at Magotty Gap, New River at Englishes Ferry and continued on to the Islands of Holston River & was stationed on that river in a fort; from that Place, Capt. Donaldson with 15 men of whom he was one, went out to search for the Cherokee Indians, ranging Principally thro' the woods in Various directions for about two weeks when they returned to the same fort where they remained until their tour of duty being for three months expired. When he was discharged by Capt. Donaldson at that place in the month of July 1776, about 300 miles from home making in all the time rendered on this tour including the time to travel home at least 3 ½ months.

His discharge is lost or mislaid so that it cannot be found but the service rendered is proved by Joshua Dodson who was a soldier with him all the time.

He again entered the Service of the U. S. as a soldier in a company of Militia commanded by the same Capt. John Donaldson, jr., Lieut. John Gwinn, and marched from the said Pittsylvania Co. on 7th day of April 1778, went thro' the county of Franklin to Colo. Preston in Montgomery, remained near his House a few days and marched from there to Hatfield Fort on Stoney Creek near New River in said Co. Montgomery, & was stationed at that place under the said Officers (no other troops being there) under the 12th of Aug. 1778, when he was discharged by Capt. Donaldson, the time of this tour being four months & 8 days. His discharge is lost, but proved by John Neal

& John Farthing, who were soldiers with him at that place.

In the winter of 1781 he was drafted as a Militia soldier & marched from the Co. of Pitts. in a company under the command of Capt. Clements, thro the County of Halifax into N. C. to Hillsborough and was there taken sick Placed in a Hospital near that Place & was confined there two months & 15 days, when he hired his Brother Joseph Chaney to take his place — Joseph was received as a Substitute for him & he was discharged from the service being still sick. His discharge is lost & cannot be found.

Relinquishes pension in other Rolls of Agency.

Sworn to & Subscribed the day & year aforesaid.

his
Abraham X Chaney.
mark

The Double Payne Wedding on New Year's Eve, 1904

On Tuesday [December 31, 1904] at high noon, the doors of Captain James Booker's hospitable mansion [at Hinesville, Virginia] were thrown open to a large number of guests, who had been invited to witness the marriage of his twin daughters, Misses Alice and Carrie, to the two brothers, Messrs. J. R. and L. H. Payne, sons of Mr. Leroy Payne, of Whitmell. The single ceremony, which united both of these loving

couples in matrimony, was impressively performed by Rev. M. L. Williams, of the Pittsylvania circuit.

The two brides were both costumed exactly alike, in gray cloth, trimmed in white satin and lace. The two grooms were also dressed exactly alike, in neatly fitted gray suits, fresh from the tailor shop. The bridesmaids, Misses Lottie Payne and Olive Fulton, wore white organdie. The groomsmen were Messrs. Walter Booker and Patrick Payne.

After the wedding ceremony a sumptuous dinner was served in the spacious dining room and “all went merry as a wedding bell.”

From “Two Girls Wed Brothers, Hinesville, VA, Dec. 31,” Danville Register, January 3, 1905.

Competition’s Name Change to Chatham

A short time before the [Civil War] a bill was introduced into the House of Delegates to change the name of the seat of justice of Pittsylvania [C]ounty — named in honor of the great Earl of Chatham — from “Competition” to “Chatham,” which it now enjoys. While the bill was on its passage, Mr. [St. George] Tucker wrote on a slip of paper, which was handed about:

“Illustrious Pitt, how glorious is thy fame,
When Competition dies in Chatham’s name!”

From “Historical and Genealogical Notes,” William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine, Vol. VI, No. 3, January 1898, p. 194.

A True Story

From the notes of Judge Langhorne Jones, Sr.
Originally from Glenn B. Updike, Sr.
Contributed by Langhorne Jones, Jr.

The scene reported below occurred in the year 1856 before the Circuit Court of Pittsylvania County, Virginia in the case of Commonwealth vs. Cassaday on a charge of malicious stabbing.

The venire being empaneled and the jury solemnly charged by the Clerk, the Commonwealth's Attorney called, in support of the indictment, the witness, Buck Bryant, who being solemnly sworn the truth to tell, testified following:

Question by the Commonwealth Attorney: "Tell all you know about the cutting of the prosecutor by Cassaday, the prisoner at the bar."

Answer: "Well, gentlemen, it was election day, — 'twas a dark, cloudy, wet sort of a drizzly day, and says I to my old woman, 'I belives I'll go down to Ringgold and 'posit my vote.' And says my old woman to me, 'Well, Buck, as it is a sort of a dark, cloudy, wet sort of a drizzly day,' says she, 'hadn't you better take your umbrill.' So I took the umbrill and 'vanced on down towards Ringgold, and when I got down thar Mr. Cole welcomed and says he, 'Uncle Buck, have you seed anything of neighbor Harris?' Says I to Mr. Cole, 'For why?' Says he, 'He's got my umbrill.'

The witness was here interrupted by the court and told to confine himself to the actual fray between the prisoner and Cole, the prosecutor. In answer to this the

witness remarked in a tone of indignant remonstrance, "Well now Mr. Judge you hold on for I am sworn to tell the truth, and I'm gwine to tell it my own way, so taint while for you to say nothing 'bout it."

Whereupon the Commonwealth Attorney being anxious to get rid of the witness upon any terms told him to go on and tell the tale his own way. "Well, as I was going on to say, 'twas on 'lection day, Buchanan and Filmo was running for the Legislature and says I to my old woman, old woman I belives I'll go down to Ringgold and 'posit my vote. Says my old woman to me, says she, 'Buck, as it is a sort of a dark, rainy, drizzly sort of a day, hadn' you better take your umbrill,' says she. Says I to the old woman, says I. 'I spect I had better take my umbrill,' So I tuck the umbrella and 'vanced on towards Ringgold 'til I arrive thar.

"Well the fust thing I did when I got thar was to take a drink of Buchanan Wiskey, which was monstrosous good, and says I to myself, says I, 'Old Hoss you feel better now, don't you?' And while I was 'vancing around, Mr. Cole, he come to me, says he, 'Uncle Buck,' says he, 'Have you seen anything of old neighbor Harris?' Says I, 'For why?' Says he, 'The old cock has my umbril.' Arter 'while I 'posit my vote and then Mr. Cole and me 'vance back towards home, and Mr. Cole was tighter than I ever seed him. And so we 'vanced along till we get to whar the road and the path forked and Mr. Cole and me tuck the path, as any other gentleman would, and arter 'vancing a while we arrive to old neighbor Harris sitten on a log with the umbrill on his arm, and about that time Elijah Cassiday (the prisoner) come up and we 'vanced on till we arrive at Elijah's house. Elijah is my neffew and likewise son-

in-law. He married my darter Jane, which is next to my darter Sally. Arter we had 'vanded to Elijah's house, we stood in the yard awhile a jawing, and presently two somebody's rid up on a horse, which was Johnson before and Whitefield Cassaday behind. Whitefield and Kiah Cassiday being the same, Elijah and Kiah is brothers, both born in the nat'ral way like eaybody else's brothers, no girls between 'em and both them is about the same age, especially Kiah, which are the youngest. Kiah was drunk and he and Mr. Cole get to cussin one nether about politix and I 'vanded in the house whar was Elijah's wife, which is my darter Jane, which is next to my darter Sally.

“Well, arter jawing a while with 'em, my neffew, says he to me, says he, ‘Uncle Buck let's go home.’ Says I, ‘Good pop,’ so we pegged out together, and I hear somebodys a callin' me but never tentioned 'em nor 'vanded back.

“Well I get home and was eating my supper and Elijah, which is my son-in-law, and married to my darter Jane, which is next to my darter Sally, arrive and says to me, ‘Uncle Buck’, says he, ‘I is killed a man.’ Says I, ‘The hell you have.’ And that's all I know 'bout the stabbing, for I wern't thar.”

The proceeding is one of the actual prize excerpts from testimony in Pittsylvania County and has been reproduced in a number of legal publications.

Queries

James Gillend is researching his McCarty/ McCarthy and Gaines lines. If anyone has information to share, please contact him at:

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6437 Tammy Lane
Mechanicsville, VA 23111
E-mail: nasc94@yahoo.com

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

Danville Museum of Fine Arts & History, 975 Main Street, Danville, VA 24541, 434-793-5644

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

News and Novels, 3282 Riverside Drive, Danville, VA 24541, 434-793-3407

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.

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.