

The Connector

Newsletter of the Tar River Connections Genealogical Society
Preserving the Past ... for the Future

Summer, 1997

Peggy Strickland, Editor

Volume 1 Issue 3

President's Corner

TRC is making progress. The Surname List is complete and we are working on Bible records and church histories. Membership is growing.

I attended a workshop by Shirley S. Stover, native American, historian and activist for Native American rights. She covered early history of Indians, their speech dialects, migration, and the cultures of different tribes. Ms. Stover gave tips on researching your Native American ancestors.

TRC and Braswell Library will host a genealogical workshop, 31 May 1997 at the library. The speaker is Ms. Charlotte Carrere.

Thanks to Lester Vick who spent an afternoon with Carmen Britton, a Northern Nash Junior, giving a video interview about his life during WWII. Lester retired after 37 years in the military. Most of his time during the war was served in the South Pacific as a tailgunner. Vick stated he was no hero, but Carmen's answer to this was, "You are wrong. You served your country well. That makes you a hero."

TRC will continue to meet the 3rd Tuesday of each month. We hope some of our out of town members will join us. **Bettie Howell Arthur**

Down Down The River — The Beginning

Tar River rises in beautiful Person County, which was named in the honor of General Thomas Person (1733-1800). Person County is bounded by the State of Virginia on the north, Granville County on the east, Caswell County on the west, while Durham County and Orange County lie to the south. Person County contains an area of 400 miles, almost a perfect square. Roxboro is the county seat and lies in the center of the county.

The history of the county began February 1, 1792 when it was created from Caswell County. Among the first white men known to

set foot in what is now Person County were William Byrd, his surveyors and commissioners from North Carolina and Virginia, who in March 1728 began to run a line between the two colonies in order to settle a 55 year old boundary dispute.

There are nine townships in Person County: Cunningham, Olive Hill, Woodsdale, Roxboro, Flat River, Holloway, Mt. Tirzah, Bush Fork, and Allenville. Tar River rises in Allenville Township and flows into Granville County. It is so diminutive at this point many maps show the stream but ignore labelling it. It is between NC 47 and US 158, east of Roxboro, a bit northeast of Surl and flows southeast into Granville County just west of Berea. The Tar River Watershed (20117 acres)

See Person County - Page 5

Last Public Hanging in Nash County

Linda Parong of LaPlata, MD, a member of Tar River Connections, has reason to remember the details of a tragic day in local history, the last public hanging to take place in Nash County. It was the murder of her great grandfather, Robert Hester, on December 21, 1899 which led to the March 15, 1900 execution. Linda was doing family research at Braswell Memorial Library in Rocky Mount, NC recently when she was reminded of the tragic events by an old newspaper clipping that related the story.

In a trial that began February 9, 1900, John Henry Taylor and Robert Fortune were tried and convicted for the robbery and murder of Mr. Robert Hester near Rocky Mount on Dec. 21, 1899. The *Nashville Graphic* described the event as "one of the most heinous and dastardly crimes committed in this county in years." After the conviction, both Fortune and Taylor confessed to the murder. Taylor gave the following account of the crime in an interview with M. W. Lincke, editor of the *Nashville Graphic* at the time:

"The day we killed Mr. Hester, I was at "Tobacco Town" (the warehouses) and there was lots of tobacco there. We did not have any money and we decided to watch the

See Hanging - P. 7

Mid-1800's Doctor Practiced at Falls of the Tar and Tarboro

Dr. Newsom Jones Pittman, born 9 August 1818 in Halifax County, received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1839. He sold his land holdings in Halifax County in order to put himself through medical school.

Prior to the 1930's, doctors were scarce in the state. They were desperately needed in rural communities.

Dr. Pittman was the first doctor in the original village of Rocky Mount at the Falls of the Tar and was practicing there in 1839. He continued to practice there for a short time. He studied in Europe for a year. After traveling for several years, he returned to practice medicine in Tarboro from 1853 until his death in 1893.

He was an officer in the NC Medical Society, on the NC Board of Medical Examiners, and served in the Confederate Army.

Dr. Pittman's first wife was **Mary Ann Streeter Pittman**, a cousin. They were married in 1858, and she died in 1861. His second wife, whom he married in 1867, was **Mary Eliza Battle**. Dr. Pittman died 14 May 1893 and was buried in Calvary Episcopal Churchyard in Tarboro, NC.

The Pittman Bible belongs to **Dr. Margaret Battle**, widow of Dr. Pittman's grandson, **Dr. Newsom Pittman Battle** and was published by Whilt & Yost, Philadelphia. Inside there is a pressed flower, probably a violet, and the name N. J. Pittman, Tarboro, N. C.

Also in the bible is the following handwritten notice of the death of Dr. N. J. Pittman:

*The funeral of
Dr. N. J. Pittman
will take place at
Calvary Church
this afternoon at 4 o'clock.
Friends of the family are
requested to assemble at
his late residence at
half past three.*

As was the custom of the day, this printed invitation, with a black grosgrain ribbon attached, was carried by servants from door to door to invite the townspeople to the burial and funeral oration.

See Bible on Page 10

A Step Back in Time

She was dressed as a lady of the mid-1800's with her shawl, lace gloves and carrying a candlestick. **Susan Putnam**, speaking as her great-great grandmother, **Susan Virginia Streeter Atkinson** (1825-1895), told Tar River Connections, at its March meeting, what it was like to grow up on the Streeter family plantation, the only child of an aristocratic planter of the antebellum South. She told of the daily life: playing with the slaves and neighboring children; riding her pony, Annabelle; being tutored with other plantation children; and learning the "womanly" skills.

As Susan became a young woman, life revolved around guests, parties that sometimes went on for days, "sleep overs" with other young ladies, and endless fittings for new gowns and hats. Suitors

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came calling and her parents began thinking of a suitable match for their daughter. The wealthy and handsome **Peyton Tunstall Atkinson** eventually won her hand.

Prior to her marriage, still not quite ready to settle into life as a young matron, Susan continued to flirt with her former beaux. Two in particular, **Edward Harris** and **Colonel Yellowly**, both of **Pitt County**, received her favors. Shortly after they all visited the Atkinson plantation, Mr. Harris challenged Col. Yellowly to a duel. Col. Yellowly killed Mr. Harris, and the rumor of the day was that the duel was fought over Susan Streeter.

After her marriage, Susan moved to Bensborough, the Atkinson home and one of the first plantations on the Tar River. It was near Falkland, between Tarboro and Greenville, in **Pitt County**, NC and about 35 miles from the Streeter plantation. Susan described it for us: "It was a magnificent three storied, columned, white house that rose up from the banks of the Tar. Its broad, well-tended lawn sloped gently down to the river. There were exquisite, well-tended box gardens in front and at the rear were giant magnolias that surrounded the house. In the spring and summer, the air was fragrant with the scent of magnolia and gardenia blossoms, cape jasmine and honeysuckle." There were also slave cabins, stables and other out-buildings. However, Bensborough was more than a plantation; it was a small port from which cotton was shipped and to which mail and other provisions were brought in. It had a post office, a cotton gin, and mercantile stores.

Susan's life at Bensborough was not without hardships. She had to deal with a mother-in-law only a few years older than herself. Her father-

in-law was in poor health, and the young groom, Peyton, was left with most of the responsibility for the running of the plantation. The couple lost two little babies before a daughter, **Rebecca**, was born. Rebecca, too, was to die at the age of 3. Eventually, a healthy son, **Benjamin**, was born and survived into adulthood.

When the Civil War began, Peyton Atkinson enlisted. Susan Virginia Streeter Atkinson, trained and skilled little more than the social graces, was left to run the plantation with barely more help than the advice given by her husband in his letters, which often took a month or more to reach her. Through necessity, she learned many new skills: to ride her horse as the men did; to be strong and tough; and to raise and protect the crops. Her husband returned from the war a sick and broken man. He went to Warrenton to visit Shiloh Springs in hopes that the waters would help restore his health. He died there in 1861. Susan Virginia Streeter Atkinson eventually returned to her girlhood home, the Streeter place, leaving Bensborough to the care of her son, Benjamin. She carried with her the bodies of her husband and her daughter, Rebecca, and remained there until her death in 1895.

Susan Virginia Putnam, great-great granddaughter of Susan Virginia Streeter Atkinson, concluded her presentation by showing a picture of her great-great grandmother and a book, "Mirrors of Bensborough," written by Bruce Cotton in the 1920's. She related additional history of Bensborough and the times of Susan Atkinson. Bensborough was located between Falkland and Greenville. On Hwy 48, there is a crossroads and an historical mark-

er for Cottondale. Turn right and go about 2 miles. On the left is a dirt road named Cottondale Drive that winds around to the Tar River. Bensborough lay directly across the river from Cottondale.

Other Bensborough connections include: **Bruce Cotton**, a well-known writer; **Sally Southall Cotton**, an early leader in eastern NC for women's rights; **Rebecca Tunstall Atkinson**, Peyton's mother who was from VA and granddaughter of **Ferebee Savage**; **Benjamin Ashley Atkinson**, father of Peyton; **Jim Bunn**, an Edgecombe Co. cousin of Ben Atkinson and postmaster of Bensborough until 1837; and **Susan Clements** of Orange County.

Cedar Rock Graduates Six

Maurice Jefferson Stokes was Valedictorian of the 1924 graduating class of Cedar Rock High School in **Franklin County, NC**. (The site is about 2 to 2½ mi. west of Castalia on Hwy 56, on the right. The Cedar Rock Baptist Church is in front of it.). Stokes' message, entitled "History of Cedar Rock Senior Class. '24," was written on a single long sheet of paper which has been rolled into a tight scroll for nearly 75 years.

The address contains several references to the assassination of President William McKinley who was shot in Buffalo, NY in 1901. The class chose as its colors red, "the color of courageous blood," and white, for the white of the sky "which was to be a symbol of purity." The class flower was the carnation. "Since this tragic crisis (death of McKinley) in our national history

the carnation has seemed to stand for all the principles embodied in the character of this splendid man."

After naming those of the original 14 classmates that had dropped by the wayside, Stokes makes the following observation: "Broad is the gate and wide is the way that leadeth to the high school, and many there be that go in thereat, but straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to graduation, and few there be that find it."

The six graduates were:

1. **Maurice Jefferson Stokes**
2. **Hiawatha Hedgepeth**
3. **Spurgeon Tharrington**
4. **Mary Gardner**
5. **Inez Sykes**
6. **Lena Wester**



ORAL
HISTORY
PROJECT

Nash County Remembers

Oral History dances blithely and irresponsibly across the boundaries between myth and truth. It encompasses tender memories, ancient furies, 20/20 hindsight, relentless mourning, outrageous pranks, and tall tales and bodacious lies told on friend and foe alike. Oral history has space for sentences which begin, "Well, according to my grandpa, who heard it from..." It accommodates eyewitness and hearsay testimony, stories told from the heart, and stories told tongue-in-cheek. It's the common man's forum and it is a priceless gift to future generations.

Nash County Cultural Center's Oral History Project is underway. A small army of scribes, volunteering

from 21 communities throughout the county, is recording the stories of the citizenry — rich and poor, black and white, exalted and humble, saints and sinners. These stories are the precious memories which constitute the self-portrait of a people.

The Connector will print one or more of these wonderful stories in each issue. The following story, told by a member of Tar River Connections, is the first in the series.

The Permanent Wave Machine

Told by Juanita Bloodworth Howell, TRC member

My mother, Sadie Bloodworth had a love of fixing hair, or, for that matter, she loved making anything and everybody pretty. She would ask the neighbors that she knew real well to come over and let her try working on their hair. she took them to the lavatory in our bathroom and let them bend over from the waist and wash their hair, and she set it with setting lotion she bought from the dime store. She never charged, but sometimes people would give her ten or fifteen cents.

In 1940, when I was ten years old, she decided to take a beauty course and open a shop in our home. My daddy loved her a lot and was agreeable and supportive. She had to go to Fayetteville to beauty school. Since my daddy worked for the railroad, he had passes for her to ride the train free. She would go to Fayetteville on Monday morning and come back on Friday evening and spend the weekend at home cramming for tests. I would help her study by holding the book and making sure she called out the names of

TRC May Meeting

TRC and the Nash County Historical Association will meet jointly at Stonewall on May 20 at 6:30. After a guided tour of Stonewall, T. E. Ricks will give a slide presentation about Rose Hill and the Boddie family.

the different parts of the body or types of skin or whatever correctly.

When my mother got her diploma, daddy went with her to Koster's Beauty Supply in Wilson to buy a few essentials to start her business. They bought a manicure table and a wash basin and two dryers and a permanent wave machine. When Mama first opened her shop, she had to hire an experienced operator so she could work as an apprentice under her for a certain period of time, maybe six months.

I was a guinea pig for trying out new products. I will never forget I was first to use the permanent wave machine. I was excited about doing it. They told me, "Oh, it is going to make you so pretty. You are going to enjoy this. Everybody is going to love the way your hair looks." There were several people who came to observe. They were just standing around, looking, and wanting to know what was going to happen.

My hair was rolled up and connected by clamps and wires that stretched from the top of the machine. I thought I was going to be electrocuted. When they turned on the current, it got hot and let out this awful chemical odor. The wires felt like they were pulling my head right off my shoulders. I really probably cried a little bit. After all the fuss and trouble, my hair looked pretty; so I guess it was worthwhile.

My mom was successful in business, enlarging her shop several

times and employing quite a few other operators to work for her. She continued fixing hair for thirty-five years.

History in a Nutshell

Ante-bellum Days in NC

Sometimes it is hard to imagine what life was like in another time or place, but let's paint a picture in our minds of ante-bellum NC.

Keep in mind that by 1860 we have seen the steam engine come into its own, the spinning-jenny, the wonderful world of "lightning telegraph," and the endless miles of railroad tracks; the introduction of chloroform and the smallpox vaccine, but epidemics of typhoid, yellow fever, cholera and influenza still prevail.

Farmland is beginning to grow sterile from the lack of crop rotations. The large planter is growing more dependent on slave labor and is faced with the moral issue of slavery.

Strangers are welcomed into plantation life —if they present letters of introduction. Most Southerners are noted for their hospitality, but on one occasion, a host presented his guests with an "exorbitant bill of \$.80 for breakfast, dinner and horse's feed" as he was leaving.

Life is far from being easy, but neither is it dull.

The ante-bellum husband controls his wife and her property and is given the "power to use such a degree of force as is necessary to make the wife behave herself and know her

A SASE is always a welcomed enclosure.

place." He often leaves his wife in charge to carry on business in his absence.

In 1849, the Raleigh Star wrote: "Let us indulge in a dream of the future and raise the curtain which hides coming events from us. Let us see North Carolina opening highways, clearing out her rivers, improving her harbors, building railroads and turnpikes, and sending down the produce of her soil by lumbering car, or puffing steamboat, to the harbors which line her coast and are whited with the sails of the commerce of the world. Then, North Carolina will be able to keep her restless sons at home, and together her people will build up the great commonwealth of which the State gave promise at the close of the American Revolution."

Frightful Accident

Little Maggie, a seven year old daughter of Mr. H. L. Leggett, met with a very painful accident last Tuesday week. She and a younger sister were in a dump cart and as the mule backed up near the kitchen steps for some purpose, the body tilted and Maggie was thrown out and so caught under the cart as to fracture her thigh in two places. She has suffered extremely.

Enquirer-Southerner 27 Nov 1874

Internet Research

The internet is adding sites of interest to the genealogist/historian on a daily basis. If you don't yet have this resource at home, most libraries provide internet access for their patrons. Below are several sites that might be of interest to Connector readers:

1. <http://www.nauvoo.com/family.chamblee/ncnash/index.htm>. Nash County, NC listing for the NCGenWeb Project. It is posted by TRC member D'Anne Stoddard and has a great variety items of interest to Nash Co. researchers.
2. <http://www.dsu.edu/%7ejankej/civilwar.html> American Civil War: Resources on the Internet.
3. <http://www.txdirect.net/~hpeeel/wilson.htm> Wilson County Genealogy Society Web Page.
4. <http://www.loc.gov/> Historical items from the Library of Congress.
5. <http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/1786/edgecombe.html> Edgecombe Co. listing for the NCGenWeb Project.

Post Cards of Rocky Mount

Doug Matthews, retired Rocky Mount fireman, presented a program of slides made from his large collection of Rocky Mount post cards for the February, 1997 meeting of Tar River Connections.

He included a number of local landmarks including churches, hotels, schools, houses, businesses, and scenic views. There was a lively discussion about where they were located, which ones were remembered by those present, and what other memories they evoked. We owe a big thanks to Doug for an enjoyable evening.

If you have items you will share such as post cards, letters, booklets, programs, etc., that reveal the past of the Tar River Connections area, the society would be pleased to have them to add to the Braswell Library collection of North Carolina materials.

Person Co - Cont. from P. 1 is located to the east of Roxboro. Allensville Methodist Church (once Bethlehem) was built on Isaac Webb's land nearby.

Among the early large landowners we find the names of Robert Jones, Osborne Jeffreys, and Colonel Stephen Moore. By the 1740's and 1750's a gradual migration brought families from Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania into the area. Person County at that time was part of Edgecombe County in the Granville District and land could be obtained cheaply from Lord Granville's agents.

Other names to be found include: Allen, Barnett, Burris, Cunningham, Dixon, Dillehay, Foushee, Hart, Holeman, Kilgore, Long, Mason, McGehee, Moore, Noell, O'Briant, Reade, Rose, Springfield, Thaxton, Van Hook, Winstead, and Yancey.

The Tar River Connection is grateful to all the people of Person County who have contributed their lives, their energy, their love of state and country to help build, protect and cherish our American heritage.

Braswell Library: Gifts from TRC Members

1. *Curl, May, et al: A Compilation of Family Records* by Clarence L. Curl
2. *Matthews Family- Nash County, N.C. 1792-1994* by Billie Jo Matthews
3. *Nash County NC Church & Family Cemeteries A-J* edited by Timothy W. Rackley and Tar River Connections
4. *Historical Map of Old Granville County From Which was Made*

Granville-Bute-Warren-Franklin-and Vance 1931 by John E. Buck
Franklin County Historical Map - 1779 Cartography & Design by R.N. Kirkman & M.C. York

Reader's Choice Local Color

1. *Tar Heel Maps: Colony and State 1590-1995* by Gregory W. Williams & Allen S. Johnson: A catalog of maps of NC with an essay of the historical background of the cartography of NC and on the events and developments which the maps portray.
2. *Remembering the Past...Renewing the Future: A History of North Rocky Mount Baptist church, Rocky Mount, North Carolina 1895-1995* by Raymond Hargus Taylor: Contains a brief history of early Tar River area and Baptists in the region.
3. *Nash County Trivia* by Vernon L. "Buck" Draughon: An entertaining and informative booklet which takes you on an educational tour of Nash County by the trivia route.
4. *By Faith and Heritage Are We Joined; Nash County Historical Notes; A Bicentennial Tribute 1777-1976* edited by T. E. Ricks: An absolute must for area genealogists.

Member Publications

Tar River Connections is proud to recognize four of its members for

New Hours

The Goldsboro LDS Family History Center is now open the first Sunday of each month from 1-5 p.m. each month except April and October.

their work in providing research materials to help the rest of us in our labors.

Joan Howell has abstracted several volumes, a number of which were edited by Reese Ferrell. Her latest is the *1870 Nash County Census*. Joan and Reese also have worked on Wilson County Cemeteries.

Tim Rackley has recently completed two volumes: *Vol. 1, Nash County Cemeteries, A-J*; and *Nash County Marriage Bonds*. He is currently working on the 2nd volume of cemeteries.

Dr. Bruce Pruitt has published a 4 volume series: *Colonial Land entries in North Carolina*. In a February NC Genealogical Society Journal review of the 4th volume, Dr. Pruitt explained: "...a series which attempts to publish abstracts of land warrants or entries made during the colonial period in North Carolina." He has also published a book of Tennessee land entries.

Addresses for these researchers appear on the TRC Membership list.

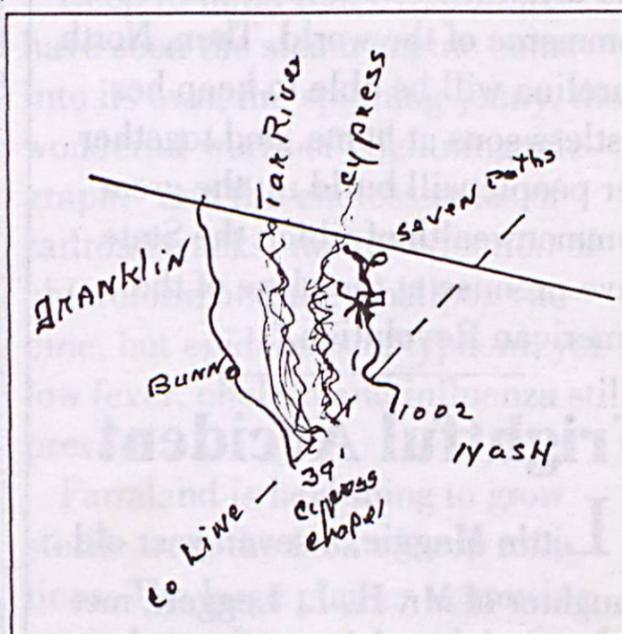
Cypress Chapel

This stately church is located in **Franklin County**, N. C. in Cypress Creek Township on State Road #1002, just below the Seven Paths Community. It is a beautiful white framed structure with a small steeple which rises above a portico supported by four sturdy columns; however, this is not the original building nor the original site. The original site is described below.

Franklin County Deed Book 31 p. 633 shows that on the 19th day of September 1856, **French S. Ross** of Franklin County deeded 2½ acres of land to **Abner Stallings** and **Willie Crowder**, trustees of Cypress

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Chapel Church for \$15.41 which was paid and was acknowledged by French S. Ross as: "a piece of ground lying and being in the said County of Franklin aforesaid and all improvements and appurtenances and the passway to the spring and its use fee simple, bounded as follows: Beginning at a Red Oak on the West side of the road near **Axum Alford's** to a corner White Oak, thence West 90 yards to a corner White Oak, thence North a line of marked trees 100 yards to a white Oak, thence East a line of marked



trees 90 yards to said road, a corner stone, thence said road 124 yards to the first station."

According to the Cypress Chapel printed history, the church was organized as a branch of Peachtree Church in 1855, and took its name from Cypress Creek, near which the charter members lived. The first Sunday School was held in the Seven Paths School in 1875.

Franklin County Deed Book 114 p. 17 shows that **J. H. Burton** and **Sallie**, his wife, sold to the deacons of Cypress 'Chapple' Baptist Church, to wit **H. W. Wilder**, **W. B. Stallings**, **W. Jack Wilder** or their successors for \$5.00 a tract of land adjoining J. H. Burton and Arrington's corner, then West 70 yards to a stake in Burton and Arrington's

line, thence North 70 yards to a pine, thence East 70 yards to a stake in Burton and Arrington's line, thence South 70 yards to the beginning, containing one acre more or less. 23 December 1895.

The chapel was built the following year. The annex was added in 1914, 12 classrooms in 1922, the parsonage in 1954, and the educational building in 1980. Cypress Chapel is a Missionary Baptist Church and belongs to the Tar River Baptist Association. **M. L. Freeman, Thomas Wilcox, G. W. Coppage, and A. A. Pippin** were among the notables who preached in the first structure. **G. W. May, G. W. Duke and J. W. Nobles** are some of the cherished pastors who preached in the present church.

A well kept graveyard is on the property. The gravestones reveal the names of many faithful members. Among them are: **Wilders, Lesters, Lamns, Moores, Collins, Stricklands, and Parkers.** The stillness of the land can be felt; only the sounds of birds and insects is heard, and occasionally a car speeds by. There is a peace for those who sleep here and comfort for those who mourn.

The following undated document shows the determination to buy land and to build a church thereon. "We the undersigned Subscribers, for the benefit of Society and enterprising spirit, of the age do faithfully and willingly subscribe and bind ourselves and our estates for the punctual payment of the amounts by us subscribed for the purpose of building a House for a 'baptis' church on the West side of the rode, below French S. Ross and on said Ross Land."

L. W. Neal	\$50
Joseph B. Mann	\$50
W. Harris	\$50
Susan Denson	\$40

-----	\$22
R. Stallings	\$23
A. Stallings	\$10
J. C. Ross	\$10
French S. Ross	\$10
Ansel Alford	\$5
Thomas C. Horton	\$5
T. H. Cheeves	\$5
W. T. -----	\$5
William T. ----	\$5
J. W. Bartholomew	\$2
-----	\$2
Bennett Gay	\$2
Anderson Stricklin	\$1
William H. Gay	\$1
Joshua Abernathy	\$1
Wiley Abernathy	\$20
Henry H. Alford	\$2
John Wiggs	.50
Wm. Baker	\$1
Dunkin Bunn	\$1
Eliza Bunn	\$1
Calvin Phippen	\$1
John R ----	\$1
Simon Alford	\$1
Thomas Moye	\$1
Joseph ----	\$1
William Stone	\$3
Bolen Melton	\$1
John J. Taylor	\$1
Bennett Taylor	\$2
Sherwood Gay	\$2
William Gay	\$1
Alexander Wiggs	\$1
Calvin Benton	\$1
Wilson Gay	\$2
Joseph H. White	\$1
William J. Boone	\$1
Alexander W. Thomas	\$1



Genealogical research is a jigsaw puzzle. If one piece doesn't fit, try another and another.

Hanging - Cont. from P. 1 sales and "spot" somebody. After staying there some time, we went to the falls. We crossed the bridge and went to a stump that stood in the road near the bridge.

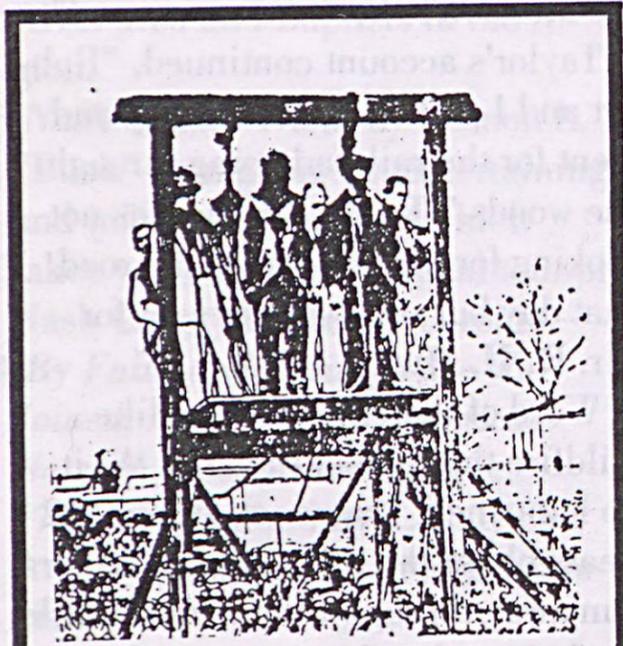
"Two or three people passed us and finally Mr. Hester came along. Robert said 'yonder comes a man.' I thought it was Mr. Bob Ricks and I told Robert to ask him for five cents. Robert said he would ask him to change a dollar. Mr. Hester stopped and pulled out his pocket book. I saw he had a book full of silver. I told him to give it all to me, at the same time pulling my pistol on him. He jumped back and then grabbed hold of my gun. Robert then shot him in the right side. Mr. Hester turned loose my gun and made a grab at Robert and I shot him in the left arm. He jumped out of his buggy still holding to his pocket book. I shot him again and saw a puff of smoke from his overcoat. He started up the road and I shot him in the back and he turned and threw the book and money toward us and said; 'Have mercy on me and don't shoot me any more.'"

Taylor's account continued, "Robert and I picked up the money and went for the railroad going through the woods." Taylor said he was not looking for Mr. Hester on the road that day but was lying in wait for **Mr. R. H. Ricks.**

Word of the crime spread like wildfire throughout the area. As it so happened, **Lawrence Boone**, 12 years old at the time, saw the killers run away through what is now Battle Park. Based on his account, the criminals were soon caught and spirited to Raleigh for safekeeping by **Sheriff Willis Warren.** Meanwhile, friends and neighbors went to the aid of the grief-stricken Hester family. **J. P. Bunn**, a prominent Rocky Mount attorney at the time, and **W. B. Rose** prepared the body for burial since it was before the days of undertakers.

The story that has been told in Linda Parong's family for nearly 100 years is that Robert Hester, a respected citizen of Nash County, was a dapper man who dressed well. He might easily have been mistaken for Bob Ricks, the intended victim of the pair of criminals, particularly since he drove a horse and buggy which was practically identical to that of Mr. Ricks. He lived long enough, after the shooting, to identify his murderers. After his death, he was buried in Pineview Cemetery in Rocky Mount.

Robert Hester, who fought in the Civil War, was married to Mollie Knott (April 1852-April 1926), also buried in Pineview Cemetery. According to his granddaughter, Mrs. J. Claude Brown, in an October 22, 1967 article in the *Evening Telegram*, he was 57 years old and the



From the March 22, 1900 *Nashville Graphic*. The original sketch has disappeared.

father of 7 children at the time of his death. His son, Robert Eugene Hester was the father of Kathleen Earl Hester Chaney, the mother of Linda Chaney Parong.

Accounts of the hanging estimate that a crowd of 35,000 came to Nashville to witness the event. They

traveled by horseback, on foot and by train. A special train ran from Rocky Mount and it was so crowded that flat cars with bleachers were added. Buggies clogged the streets and overflowed into private yards. The weather added to the atmosphere of the occasion. It was a cloudy, dark day-- so dark, in fact, that some said the chickens went to roost, and it was raining "cats and dogs." *Nashville Graphic* editor, M. W. Lincke, gave ten-year-old Boddie Ward (later to become a prominent Wilson business leader) the task of holding an umbrella over the camera which was set on a tripod in front of the gallows.

The prisoners were led from the jail with an escort of fifty guards with shot guns. The sheriff tied a black hood over the face of each man, paused a minute, and pulled the gallows lever. Three doctors, a Dr. Strickland, a Dr. Mann and one other, pronounced Taylor and Fortune dead.

Deputy N. C. Warren, son of Sheriff Warren, was given the bodies of the murderers in return for feeding them "hearty meals" of any food they liked. The two spent their last days eating "mighty high on the hog." Warren is said to have sold the bodies to the University of North Carolina for study and dissection.

The trial and subsequent hanging of John Henry Taylor and Robert Fortune involved a number of Nash County citizens. The sheriff at the time of the murder and trial was Willis M. Warren. The judge was Dossey Battle and L.I. Moore was solicitor. The jurors were: J. H. Vaughan, H. T. Fulford, J. D. Lewis, R. B. Vick, J. A. T. Vester, L. G. Edwards, J. A. Glover, Redmond Wells, P. D. Stallings, C. W. Sears, and Geraldine Rice.

Paid witnesses were: W. L. Stallings, Constable Oppenheimer Calhoun, J. H. Baker, Jr., M. W. Lincke, M. C. Braswell, J. J. Boon, D. Bobbitt, B. F. Smith, M. Oppenheimer, Dr. M. R. Braswell, C. V. Harris, G. W. Smithson, Robert Watson, Haywood Adams, Wm. Wells, Boney Mangum, Richmond Lawrence, and Carey Bunn.

A Quiet Place

If once you have visited the Jackson Family Cemetery, you'll never be quite the same. It possesses you; it intrigues you. You feel that life is cadenced to the stories these tombstones tell; you cannot absorb them in one visit.

There is an enchantment, a spell which lingers. You feel the compulsion to return. Here, there is peace as no other place. Tall stately trees protect the area from the sun's hot rays. Spotted here and there are flowers blooming in season. Someone still cares!

The first time I visited the cemetery, we parked on the side of the road; went down a muddy path, crossing 2 streams of water; removed some branches which had fallen in the path; through the woods until we saw daylight. Gravestones were sparkling, birds were singing, and the wind was rustling the fallen leaves.

At last, we had found the burial place of relatives, friends and of many people we had read about or heard about. Here lie friends with the names of Jackson, Robbins, Wilson, Braswell, Jones, Webb, Peoples, Melton, Gardner, Vick, Etheridge, Taylor, Brake, Williams, Wood, Gay, Hill, Turner,

Moore, Brown, Edwards, Farmer, Williford, and Luper.

One story gleaned from the stones will forever haunt me.

Sally L., wife of J. T. Jackson

Dec. 2, 1878 - Feb. 20, 1920

Beside are gravestones of her infants in a long row.

The earliest grave in the cemetery is that of **Elizabeth**, wife of **Lemon Jackson**: Mar. 15, 1814 - Oct. 4, 1886.

This cemetery is in Edgecombe County between Arlington Street Extension and Old Wilson Road on Vestal Road, Rocky Mount, NC.

Isle of Wight, VA Home of Many Tar River Ancestors

From narrative by **Henry Powell**
On Isle of Wight Tour

Islle of Wight County developed from the area of the Virginia colony known as "Surreyside," which lay on the south side of the James River. Originally it encompassed a great area, some of which formed the counties of **Surry, Southampton and Greenville**. Surreyside was the original new world home of many families who migrated to the Tar River Basin.

Some groups who came to Surreyside included Puritans from Holland and England with family names including **Reynolds, Jordan, Basse, Atkins, Pearson, Sherwood, Evans, Phillips, Daniel, and Dixon** from Holland and **Bridger, Godwin, Drake, Norsworthy, Marshall** from southwestern England; Royalists leaving England to escape Cromwell's Puritan government, including **Woodard, Bacon, Bradshaw** and **Williamson**; and Quakers who left England at Cromwell's

death, among which can be found **Robinson, Peelle, Stephenson, Harris, Jordan, Jones, Brigs, Moss, Barker, Harvey, Greene, Hunnicutt, Watkins, Williams, Skinner, Hunt, Johnson, Thorne, Bynum, Thompson, and Lewis.**

Southampton, Isle of Wight and Surrey counties include a number of landmarks, some of which are associated with NC names.

1. **Edward Boykin**, ancestor of local area Boykins, settled near Ivor in 1685. There is a granite obelisk in that area commemorating his contributions.
2. **Francis Boykin**, a revolutionary soldier and grandson of Edward, donated land for a courthouse. This courthouse, miles from the center of activity, is still being used. The old courthouse, in Smithfield, VA, is used as a visitor's center.
3. **Bacon's Castle**, a two-story brick plantation house, was built by **Arthur Allen** about 1665. It is called Bacon's castle because it was occupied by the forces of **Nathaniel Bacon** who in 1676 led a revolt against British rule. The house has

never been allowed to fall into disrepair. With its additions and renovations, it is a grand example of 17th-19th century architecture and life. (In one of the rooms, where wallpaper was stripped away, one can still see where a child has written on the wall, "W.B. James August 27, 1886." and later "Sept 20 1888 This day I am sick." There is also a drawing of the plantation showing the various buildings, including the house a barn, and an old log cabin.) The garden has also been excavated and is described as "the largest, earliest, best-preserved, most sophisticated garden that has come to light in North America."

4. **William Powell**, Lt. Governor of Jamestown, acquired several hundred acres of land in Surreyside and named the site in honor of an Indian chief, **Chippokes**, because he had befriended the settlers. This was the oldest plantation on Surreyside. The site is now a state park and a private foundation which shows a typical 17th century farm.

5. **Thomas Warren** built a brick colonial home in about 1651 on land given to his father by **Chief Powhatan** as a wedding gift. The home was renewed by colonial Williamsburg and is now operated by a local private foundation.
6. **Surry Courthouse** has original records dating to 1651. It has a monument to **Chanco**, the Indian who warned the governor of the colony of the impending massacre in 1622, thus preventing the entire colony from being wiped out.
7. The Virginia Company in 1621 gave a land grant (called Basse's Choice) to **Arthur Swayne** and **Nathaniel Basse** to bring 100 persons to Virginia. The settlement

IMPORTANT LAND

SALE!

By virtue of a Mortgage Deed made and executed to me February 1st, 1875 by **E. P. Daniel** and wife, I will sell for Cash at the Court House door in the town of Greenville, **Pitt County**, on Monday, the 3rd day of January, 1876, One Hundred and Fifty-two acres of

Valuable Land,

adjoining the lands of **Benjamin Daniel** and the lands of the late **David Langley** on the North side of **Tar River**, in Pactolus Township in said county.

McG. DANIEL

By his Attorneys **Jarvis & Sugg.**

Dec. 10th, 1875

tds.

was family-based. It was almost annihilated in the Indian Massacre of 1622. Nathaniel Basse's son, **John**, moved to Nansemond and married an Indian woman. He has many descendents in Nash County. 8.St. Lukes Shrine, or "The Old Brick Church", built around 1632, is the oldest Gothic brick structure and house of worship in America. The British used it as a dormitory during the revolution as did the Confederates during the Civil War.

After Bacon's Rebellion, a group of participants wrote a formal apology for their participation. The apology was signed by:

Walter Vohan	Robt Evans
Tho. Pittman Sr	Ja. Forbes
Tho. Gibbons	Jno Hunnicut
Jno Skinner	Hen. H Baker
Robt Judkins	Jno Clements
Thomas Senior	Wm Pettway
Wm. H. Heath	Geo Williams
Geo Harris	Jno Palestone
Matthew Magnus	Nio Johnson
Jno Skelton	Wm Rugbye
Stephen Lewis	Edw Pettway
Fra Every	Wm W Newitt
Samuel Pearce	Wm W. Blount
Edmund Howell	Geo Proctor
Jonas Bennett	Jon Phillips
Alex A Spencer	Wm Jones
Edw Davis	Sam Judkins
Cor Cardenpaine	Richard True
Stephen Allen	Thomas King
Tho High	Jno _____

The migration from the Surrey-side area to eastern NC began about 1720 and continued until about 1750. Being aware of this thirty-year migration makes it easier for the genealogist to connect his NC family with VA ancestors.

Henry Powell, President of the Wilson County Genealogical Society, and his wife, **Sue**, compiled a list of early (before 1750) Isle of Wight/Surry County families,

See *Isle of Wight* - p 11

Dr. N. J. Pittman Bible

Marriages

Dr. N. J. Pittman c. 1858 married Mary Ann Streeter [Pittman]
 Dr. N. J. Pittman 1867 married Mary Eliza Battle, widow of W. F. Dancy
 16 April 1895
 Cornelia Bradford Pittman married John Wilkes Booth Battle
 2 January 1937
 Newsom Pittman Battle married Margaret White Battle
 Octave Battle Married Christine Boone 4 July 1957
 Octave Battle married Shelby Wilmoth 17 September 1969
 Ann Battle married James Carlisle Poole December 1965
 Elizabeth Christine Battle married Daniel Comb November 1982

Births

Dr. Newsom Jones Pittman	9 August 1818	
Mary Ann Streeter Pittman	24 June 1838	
Kate	30 April 1859	d/o Dr. NJ Pittman & Mary
Minerva	23 July 1860	d/o N.J. Pittman & Mary
Eliza Battle	3 March 1868	d/o NJ Pittman & Mary Eliza
Cornelia Bradford	22 April 1872	d/o NJ Pittman & Mary Eliza
Newsom Pittman Battle	16 June 1896	s/o Cornelia Bradford Pittman & John W. B. Battle
Florence Eleanor White Rahles	19 June 1909	
Octave B. Battle	30 June 1938	s/o Newsom P. Battle & Margaret White Battle
Florence Anne Battle	29 July 1941	
Elizabeth Christine Battle	April 1958	d/o Octave Battle & Christine Boone Battle
Christopher Carlisle Poole	14 ____ 1968	s/o James C & Anne B Poole
Stephen James Poole	10 Aug 1971	s/o James & Anne B Poole
Jesse Battle	16 Oct 1978	s/o Octave & Shelby Wilmoth Battle

Wolfgang Felix Rahles	19 October 1911
Anna Victoria Mueller	4 June 1887

Deaths

Kate Pittman	[4 May] 1873
Minerva Pittman	1940
Eliza Pittman	13 July 1889
Cornelia Bradford Pittman Battle	9 June 1954
Dr. Newsom Jones Pittman	14 May 1893
Mary Pittman	10 Jan 1861 w/o Dr. N J Pittman
Cornelia Pittman Battle	14 October 1977
John Wilkes Booth Battle	September 1915
Newsom Pittman Battle	13 January 1990
James Smith Battle	31 May 1963
Cornelia Battle	
Wolfgang Felix Rahles	12 February 1988
Anna Victoria Rahles	15 November 1944
Florence Eleanor White Rahles	22 October 1996

Isle of Wight - Cont from p. 10
nearly all of which had one or more
relatives who migrated to NC.

Richard Alford	Arthur Allen
Henry Applewaite	John Atkins
William Baker	John Barber
John Barker	Joshua Barnes
Nathaniel Basse	John Battle
John Batts	Edward Bennett
Peter Best	Jack Blair
Walter Blake	Edward Boykin
John Bradshaw	John Brewer
Joseph Bridger	Jesse Brown
William Bullock	Thomas Bunn
John Bynum	Thomas Clarke
Joseph Cobb	Henry Crocker
Christopher Daniel	John Darden
John Davis/Davis	Thomas Davis
Adam Dixon	John Dodd
William Edwards	William Ellis
Robert Evans	Jeremiah Exum
Richard Fenn	Thomas Flower
Antony Fulgham	John Glover
Thomas Godwin	Edward Greene
Thomas Hall	George Hardy
Thomas Harvey	Richard Hayes
Daniel Herring	Richard Hill
Elias Hinton	Robert Holland
Henry Horne	Edmond Howell
John Hunnicutt	Thomas Hunt
Rich. Jackson	Joseph Johnson
Anthony Jones	Richard Jordan
Henry King	Rbt Lancaster
William Lewis	James Manning
John Marshall	George Moore
John Moss	Josiah Parker
Robert Peelle	John Phillips
William Powell	John Proctor
William Rand	Wm Robinson
Robert Ruffin	William Sawyer
Thom. Sherwood	Wm Short
John Skinner	Roger Smith
John Stone	Marm. Stephenson
Ethelred Taylor	Robert Thomas
Sam'l Thompson	Martin Thorne
William Tucker	Thomas Uzzell
Lawrence Ward	Thomas Warren
Rich. Watkins	Robert Watson
Stephan Webb	Geo Whitehead
Wm Wilkinson	Daniel Williams
Jas Williamson	Thomas Womble
Henry Woodard	Robert Wright

Lest We Forget Three Friends

More than two million men were involved in military activity in the American Civil War. Among them were three Warren County, NC friends who volunteered for the Confederate Army: **Joseph Horton Perdue, Ransom Clark and William Clark**. Perdue was killed in the trenches of Petersburg on July 10, 1864; William Clark, his brother-in-law died of dysentery at Point Lookout, MD on February 10, 1865. Ransom Clark survived. He married Perdue's widow, **Indianna Allen Perdue** on March 11, 1869. By the turn of the century, Ransom Clark, his wife, her children, their children, William Clark's widow and their son had migrated to **Edgecombe County, NC**.

Micajah Pettaway

The first of the Pettaway family on record were in Southside, VA. where **Joseph Pettaway** owned land in Surry County. There is a will for **Joseph Petway**, probated 19 March 1749 which names sons **William Joseph, Micajah** and **James**.

It is believed that **Micajah Petway** and wife **Amy** were the parents of **Micajah Pettaway** who served during the American Revolution and in the War of 1812. **Micajah** and **Amy** lived in Edgecombe County on the north side of Fishing Creek. **Micajah**, who lived all his life in **Edgecombe County**, was married several times. His first wife was **Mary Sugg** and their children were: **William Davis**, sheriff in Edgecombe County; and **Polly**, who died young. His second wife was **Sarah Walton** and their children

CONNECTOR

were: **John Petway**, who went to Kentucky; **Micajah Petway**, for whom there are no records; **Elizabeth Petway** m. **Abner Eason**; **Susan Petway** m. **James Langley**; **Catherine Petway** m. **Edmund H. Rhodes**; **Martha Petway** m. **Nathan Johnson**; **Robert Petway**, no records; **Willie J. Petway** m. **Elizabeth Ward**. **Micajah Petway's** third wife was **Elizabeth Little Skinner** and their son was **Joseph Little Petway** m. **Melvina Williams**.

Micajah Pettaway served with Lafayette at Brandywine and George Washington at Valley Forge. He was a major in the American Revolution and captain in the War of 1812. He was called by acclamation to raise a company of men in 1812 and he marched and lived as they did, enduring all the hardships. He believed this country should be completely free of the British. **Micajah** died in Edgecombe County 12 April 1849 and was buried on his farm.

New Members

M. T. "Marge" Mathis-Smith
5231 County Road 2128
Snyder, TX 79549
573-8044

Bertie Murry Brantley
7254 Children's Home Road
Middlesex, NC 27557
919-235-3542

Leamond Anthony Allen
4210 S. Artesian Ave. 2nd Floor
Chicago, IL 60632-1204
773-254-2903

Billy L. Bunting, Jr.
4019 Saltee Road
Greensboro, NC 27406
910-299-9749

Management Problems on the Plantation

An excellent overseer was difficult to find. The work was strenuous and the pay small. The relation between **Phillips Moore** of Mount Tirzah in **Person County** and his overseer, **Nathaniel Smith**, during the planting year of 1819-1820 was typical of conditions on many a small plantation.

In November, 1819, owner and overseer entered into an agreement in which Smith's duties were listed. They included: "take charge of the hands, to assist in feeding the stock of every kind, to see that there is plenty of fire wood always provided at the door for the house fires, to take care of all farming utensils of every description, to repair fences, ..." For these duties, Smith was to receive two hundred Dollars or its value for the term of one year.

Accustomed to keeping strict accounts at his country store, Moore also kept strict account of his overseer's activities, charging him at the end of the year with having lost twenty-two and a third days from work. He set down each offense as it occurred so that at the end of the year he had an imposing list with which to confront the overseer: "Nathaniel Smith lost this day, his wife being sick. This day away about your pork....fatening hogs got out, you unconcerned, came & set down by fire. No care taken of tobacco stript the other night, at night a horse verry sick, paid no attention to him. Went to the Court house-

Query: Seek information on **William (Willie) GRIZZLE (GRISSELL)** who served in the American Revolution from Nash Co., NC. He is listed in the NC DAR, Roster of Soldiers from North Carolina in the American Revolution (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1984).

....Went to muster....Went to Mother in Law's....Went fishing, left the plow & horse, & neglected the hands (corn verry foul. ch.^d you \$1)....Thursday went to the Election...went to sale...went to General Muster...." Taking out \$14 for lost time, about \$12 for provisions advanced, chiefly brandy, shoe repairing, and a barrel of flour, Moore discharged his part of the agreement by giving the overseer three notes for \$58 each, and set about looking for another manager.



NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Keep your surname sheets coming!
New list will be published in 1998.

Gold Valley

Gold Valley, west of Spring Hope, got its name from the gold mining which took place there. Gold mining began with enthusiasm when **Tobe Brantley** said, "Evan Morgan found a nugget of gold as big as a turkey egg." The gold mine land was originally owned by **Augustus Sanders**. **Southgate Jones** also mined the area for gold but the Federal Land Bank gained control of the land. The digging continued until 1939.

Two of the oldest houses at Gold Valley are the **Lee Mullen** place and the **Augustus Sanders** place.

The Mullen house originally had no glass in the window openings. They were closed with shutters when necessary. Part of each house was put together with pegs. Other early landowners included **Madison Strickland**, **Lee Mullen**, **Daniel Strickland**, **D.E. Cone**, **Thallie Cone**, **Henry Woodard**, and **Willie Murray**.

Gold Valley played baseball with Seven Paths one afternoon in 1890. **Tinker Denton** hit the ball so far he was able to circle the bases twice before the outfielders could get the ball back to the infield (a double home run!). The game began at 1:30 and ended at 8:00 pm with the score 240-169.

There are two old cemeteries in the area: the Sanders and the Stricklands. **R. H. Sanders** (1816-1887) is buried in the Sanders cemetery. **Madison Strickland** (1882-1887) and **Mahala Strickland** (1837-1919) are among those in the Strickland cemetery.

The first school at Gold Valley was a one-teacher school near the cross roads; the second was a two-teacher school. Some teachers in these early schools were **Posey Tilley**, **Minnie Davenport**, **Ethel Beal** and **Lessie Sellers**.

Mr. Moore was an early rural mail carrier.

Gold Valley is just off the interchange of U. S. 64 Bypass and N. C. 231 just west of Spring Hope.

Tar River Connections welcomes new members, visitors, inquiries, bible records, church histories, gifts and suggestions for The Connector. Please contact us at PO Box 8764, Rocky Mount, NC 27804.