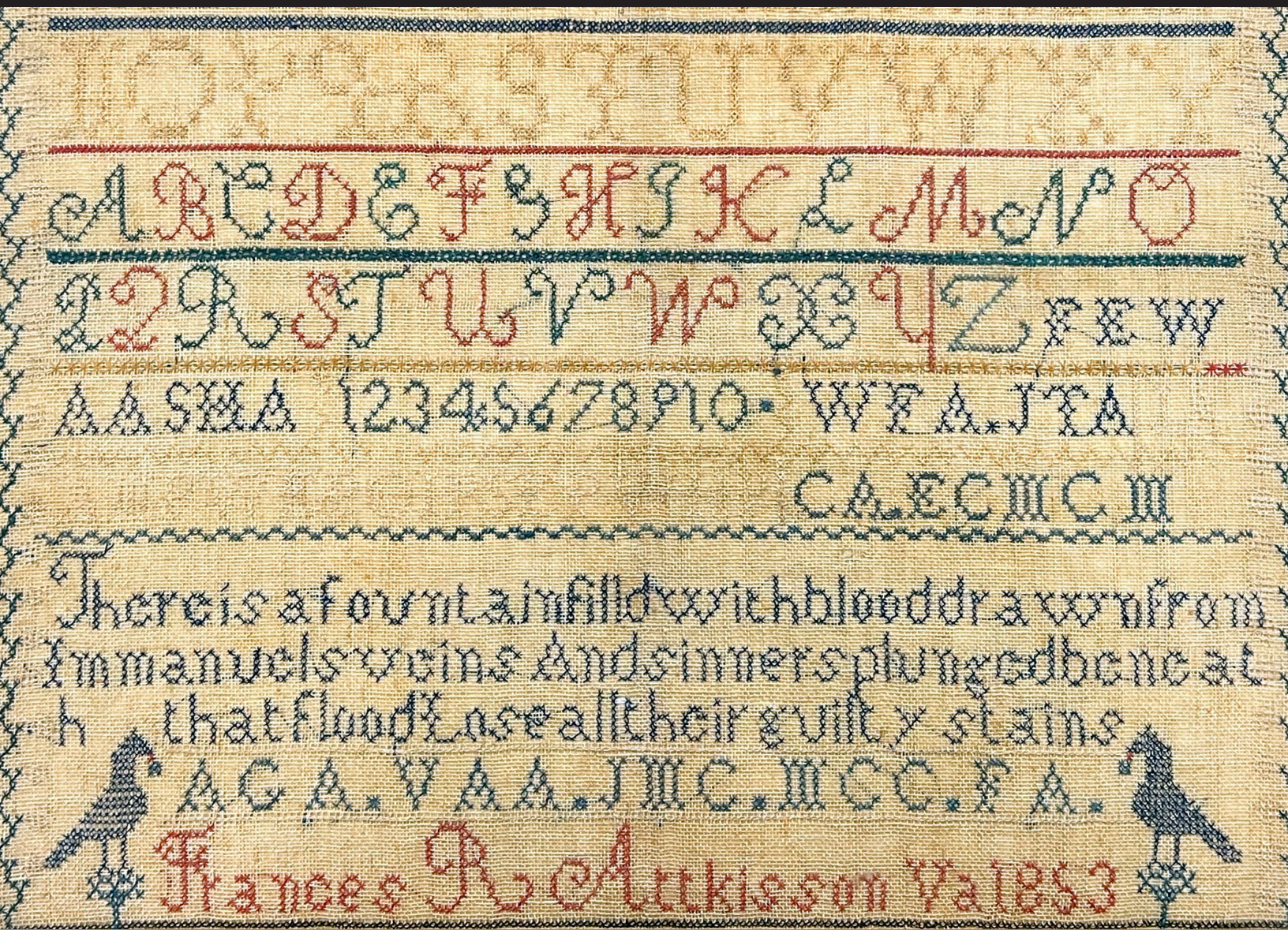


Goochland County Historical Society

Newsletter

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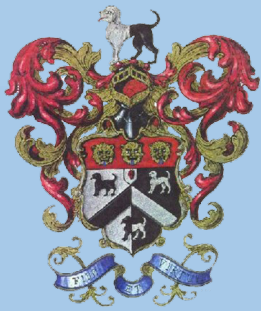
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The Society's History Center is located next to the Goochland Courthouse Green at 2924 River Road West (Route 6)

Office hours:

Wednesday–Friday, 10:00–3:00
2nd Saturday of the month, 10:00–3:00

Note: Those travelling long distances should call the society to confirm it will be open the date of your visit.
Phone (804) 556-3966.

Email the Society:

goochlandhistory@comcast.net

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Goochland County Historical Society was well-represented in the Goochland Day Parade on May 19. Billy McGuire of Manakin-Sabot drove his beautifully restored, 115-year-old Ford Model T, and gracing his front bench, Suzanne Taylor, Randolph Elementary School teacher, was cheered along the route by many current and former students. From the rear of the venerable vintage “Tin Lizzie”, Goochland 250th Commission Chair Manny Alvarez and I called greetings to new and old friends in the crowd.

As you may know, the Goochland branch of the Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission was organized by the Society at the request of the County Board of Supervisors. The statewide initiative commemorates the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and promotes the theme “to form a more perfect union.” The Goochland commission is planning events through 2031. That year will be the 250th anniversary of General Charles Cornwallis’s campaign in the county in which he destroyed Governor Thomas Jefferson’s Elk-hill before turning east and marching to ignominy and defeat at Yorktown.

Mark your calendar for “Run to the Revolution,” a 5K race at Elk Hill this September, sponsored by the Goochland 250 Commission to raise public awareness of our important role in the final stages of the war.

Plans are also underway to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the Marquis de Lafayette’s visit in November 1824. The Marquis was feted at both Powell’s Tavern in eastern Goochland and again at Anderson’s Tavern in Goochland Court House on his way to visit Thomas Jefferson at Monticello.

As we mentioned in the April newsletter, the new edition of *Gravesites and Cemeteries of Goochland County, Virginia* will be at the printer this month. In an extraordinary accomplishment, First Vice President Richard Toler, has overseen this project and personally verified almost every one of the nearly 10,000 entries.

I cannot think about gravesites and cemeteries without recalling a story told almost four decades ago by former Society President Joe Scales. When he retired, he and his wife Roselle took a trip to Ireland to view the Emerald Isle’s historic sites and look for some long-ago family connections, gravesites and cemeteries. Following a guided tour of an ancient church, Joe was standing outside, gently tamping tobacco into his pipe and was about to light up when he realized he had not exercised proper Virginian hospitality. As he extended his tobacco pouch to the priest with an offer to share, the words were scarcely out of his mouth when he realized it might be considered a sin to indulge in the vice of tobacco and immediately apologized if

he had caused offence. The priest replied, with a twinkle in his eye, “Sure ‘tis better to smoke in this world than the next.”

Joe loved history and he loved stories. You are making history in today’s Goochland. Tell us your stories.

Sincerely,

Robin Lind, President



D-DAY: 80 YEARS LATER



Our newest exhibit, on display until August 31, 2024, pays homage to those who fought in World War II.

Success was not guaranteed on D-Day, June 6, 1944, when the largest and most

complex military operation in history, comprised of 156,000 American, Canadian, and British troops, stormed 50 miles of heavily fortified Normandy beaches to liberate Europe from Nazi Germany. By the end of the day, 4,414 Allied troops, including 2,500 Americans, had been killed.

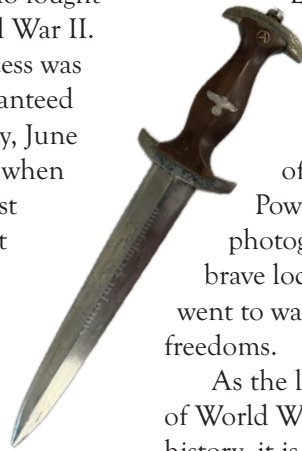
Our D-Day exhibit focuses on Goochland men who

fought in World War II. It includes an “Eisenhower” jacket belonging to Sgt. Richard Cridlin, a dagger he took from a German officer, a copy of the letter General

Eisenhower sent to the D-Day landing force, the full summer uniform of Sgt. Henry

Powers Shelton, and photographs of other brave local soldiers who went to war to defend our freedoms.

As the last survivors of World War II pass into history, it is important that we remember them and honor their service.



RUN TO THE REVOLUTION

In 1781, when General Charles Cornwallis had finished looting, pillaging, stealing the cattle, killing the horses, and watching Thomas Jefferson’s barns, and out-buildings burn to the ground at Elk-hill in western Goochland, he turned his army eastwards and began a march to the place that would seal his doom and that of the British Empire in America – Yorktown.

The road to Yorktown began in Goochland.

To commemorate that fateful journey the Goochland 250 Commission will hold its first Annual 5K race at Elk Hill on September 14, 2024.

Styled “Run to the Revolution,” it will be open to serious runners, amateur walkers and watchers. The course is primarily over level fields on the property of Elk Hill Academy, all of which was once part of Jefferson’s



plantation and much of which was occupied in June 1781 by Cornwallis’s 5,000-strong army.

The race is being organized with the help of Commonwealth Timing and RunSignup. For more information, please visit <https://www.exploregoochland.com/187/VA-250-American-Revolution>

If you are interested in participating or just coming out to watch please stay tuned to the Society website and local media.

The Goochland 250 Commission is organized by the Goochland County Historical Society at the request of the Board of Supervisors to commemorate the events of 250 years ago leading up to the Declaration of independence in 1776 and the subsequent events that led to the surrender of the British forces at Yorktown. The Commission is led by former County Supervisor Manny Alvarez.

RIP WITNESS TREE



The Great White Oak on the west side of First Baptist Church Manakin in April 2024.

Goochland County lost one of its largest and oldest “Witness Trees” on May 22-23, 2024 with the careful and deliberate removal of the great White Oak which had sheltered First Baptist Church Manakin for the past century.

The tree had developed serious hollow areas and showed signs of stress in recent years. It was also leaning heavily toward the brick church which was built in 1922.

An arborist who had inspected it came to the sad conclusion that it might topple in severe weather, and recommended it come down. In fact, it turned out that the trunk was completely hollow from the base to almost 12 feet above the ground.

The tree, which was 19 feet, three inches at waist height, had a crown almost 100 feet wide and was estimated to be more than 80 feet tall. A count of its annual growth rings revealed that it was 272 years old, which means that it began growing in 1752. It was already 24 years old in 1776, at the time of the Declaration of Independence.

According to the Piedmont Master Gardeners, the largest white oak in Virginia is in Brunswick County. It is 86 feet tall with a crown of 120 feet and is thought to be more than 500 years old.

As the great 14th century poet Geoffrey Chaucer is reputed to have written “Mighty oaks from little acorns grow.”

A “Witness Tree” is known as one that existed at the time of the American Revolution. If you have a mighty tree in your neighborhood, the GCHS and the Goochland 250 Commission would be very interested in knowing about it. Please be in touch.

-By Robin Lind



Above: Every year is marked by a distinct ring; the variations mark wet or dry seasons. 272 rings from the center to the outermost bark.

Below: 97-year-old Randolph Snead, a member of the congregation for 85 years, at the hollowed out base. (Photographs courtesy of Robin Lind)



THE SAMPLER TELLS A STORY

Like most young girls of her day, Frances Attkisson stitched a sampler. Born in 1838 to Archibald and Sarah Attkisson of Goochland County, Frances worked her sampler in 1853 when she was about 15 years old. She inscribed her name along the bottom. Her parents' initials, along with those of her siblings also appear.

Archibald and Sarah married in 1828 and had four children; Frances was the youngest. The family may have moved to Goochland County for her father's job, as Archibald was a schoolteacher here. Her father died in 1853, the same year Frances completed her sampler.

Her sampler is typical of the period, following a classic, square 19th century format. In addition to family initials, Frances worked several alphabets, as well as cross-stitched birds, each with a berry sprig in its beak, which flank her inscription. She also included a verse from the well-known poet William Cowper (1731 - 1800). A framework of vines along the sides and a large budding vine along the top complete the sampler.

Frances used silk thread on linen for her sampler. When completed, it must have been quite colorful; however, over the years, the threads, some more so than others, faded, depending on the dyes used. Even after 171 years, the sampler remains in remarkable condition. It has been conservation mounted by M. Finkel & Daughter of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a well-known sampler and needlework dealer, offering conservation services and genealogical research.

The Goochland County Historical Society now includes this outstanding 19th century example of a

young girl's needlework in its collection, thanks to the generosity of Kathy Sanders. Several months ago, Ms. Sanders stopped by the Society and told us about a sampler she had purchased. She said if we could offer proof that Frances Attkisson once lived in Goochland County, she would donate the sampler. We immediately got to work researching the Attkisson family and were able to offer proof that Frances had indeed lived in the county. We enjoyed the challenge and reaped the reward. We sincerely thank Ms. Sanders for the sampler and we appreciate that she went the extra mile to have it conserved by the best in the business—M. Finkel & Daughter. For more information on historic samplers, see the company's website at www.samplings.com; it provides a wealth of information, ranging from online exhibits and museums with collections of samplers to other resources, such those for genealogical research, as samplers, like the one made by Frances Attkisson, sometimes offer full names and/or initials of family members.

If you have an historic sampler, you might consider registering it with the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America (<https://nscda.org>). Because historic samplers can be quite fragile, the Society has undertaken a Sampler Survey project to make information about women's needlework as accessible as possible, thus promoting the Society as a source of information on the history of women's education through needlework. We will contact a local textile expert to see what guidance she can offer on their care, so look for that article in an upcoming newsletter.

-By Catherine Southworth and Christina Dunn



FAMILY FOLKLORE: FACT OR FICTION

Family folklore often is a mixture of facts and apocryphal tales. Did your family really descend from nobility? Was a great-uncle really shot in a roadhouse raid during Prohibition? Sorting fact from fiction can be a daunting challenge. Help often comes from unexpected sources such as that box of musty, old papers and letters that Grandma saved. Exploring them in a new light may provide clues for tracking down the real facts.

For example, family lore claimed that my father's maternal grandfather, J. B. McCullough, fought for the Union in the Civil War and was at Gettysburg. As I started gathering facts about my great-grandfather, things were not making sense. He was born on March 13, 1847, which would have made him 14 years old at the start of the war. The enlistment age for Union soldiers was 18. Could he have lied about his age in order to enlist early or perhaps could he have enlisted nearer to the end of the war? Additionally, I had found no record of him having participated in the battle of Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863.

Looking for leads, I decided to explore a collection of old, unwanted papers that I received many years ago after my grandmother's death. Those fading, old papers proved to be a goldmine of leads. One item was a yellowed 1911 newspaper article from a small town in Pennsylvania about a reunion of my great-grandfather's family in which the military service of the attendees was recorded. From that I learned that he was indeed in the Civil War and the identification of his unit, 11th Regiment, Pennsylvania Cavalry, 108th Volunteers, Company G. Next, I found a faded letter dated April 9, 1913 to his daughter Elizabeth,

in which he writes "48 years ago, today I was a happy boy. I had no breakfast, no dinner, no supper, but was glad anyway." Doing the math, I discovered that on April 9, 1865 ~ 48 years before that date in 1913, General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant



J. B. McCullough (Courtesy of Linda Toler)

at Appomattox Courthouse. My great-grandfather must have been close by to have received the news of Lee's surrender so quickly. Researching great-grandfather's military unit revealed they were indeed in the Appomattox campaign that led up to Lee's surrender.

With the help of Grandma's musty papers, I was able to verify the fact that my great-grandfather fought in the Civil War. Plus I finally was able to sort out his enlistment record from several others online. As I suspected, he enlisted near the end of the war. Additionally, I now know that, instead of being at Gettysburg, he was in another important

campaign, one that effectively ended the Civil War. And as a bonus, among those papers was a tin-type of my great-grandfather as a young man!

When researching your family history, remember that family folklore is not always completely factual. To help sort fact from fiction, look to those boxes of old family papers you or others in your family may have stored away. They could provide crucial clues to move your research forward and help sort fact from fiction.

The Historical Society has a variety of memorabilia from Goochland residents which we can help you explore. Stop by or give us a call Wednesday through Friday from 10 am-3 pm.

~ By Linda Toler

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Bruce Ballard • Trigg & Carrington Brown • Victor Carpenter • Gary Denton • David & Jane Francis
Pat Garber • Jeff & Denise Graves • Watkins & Tyler Hunt • Jeff & Nancy Jones • Jonathan Lyle
William Perkins • Miranda Perry • Bob & Joanne Ramsey • Al & Liz Rider • Jay & Nancy Ritter
Shirley Seaborn • Wanda Taylor • Timothy Tyler • Jack & Betty Williams

CEMETERY CORNER: SLAYDEN FAMILY CEMETERY

The first record of William J. Slayden, born about 1839 in Goochland County, appears in the 1850 U.S. Census. He is identified as one of six children born to William and Margaret Slayden. By 1860, the U.S. Census shows him in Dover District in the Johnson's Springs area, living with the family of Lucy Hodges. At the time, he was identified as being 21 years old and a laborer. His future wife Evelina, then 18, was a member of this family.

William enlisted in the Confederate Army on June 3, 1861 in Goochland County. He entered as a private in the 44th Virginia Infantry which had just been created, with men from Richmond and Farmville, as well as the counties of Appomattox, Buckingham, Louisa, Amelia, Fluvanna, and Hanover, in addition to Goochland. The unit was involved in many engagements from the Seven Days' Battles in 1862 to the Battle of Cold Harbor in 1864. During the war, the unit was decimated as soldiers were killed, injured, or captured. For example, it sustained 71 casualties at Chancellorsville in 1863. By the time of Lee's surrender in April 1865, only one officer and 12 men from the unit were available to surrender with him.

On May 12, 1864, William was captured at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia. Initially he was sent

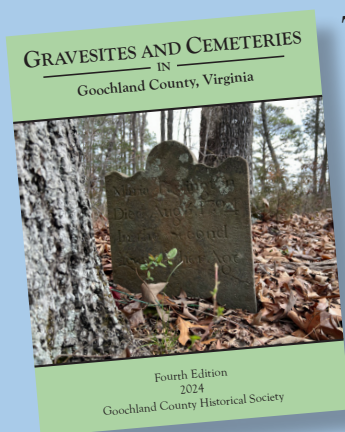


on May 18, 1864 to the Point Lookout Prison in Maryland, but two months later, he was transferred to the Union Prison in Elmira, New York, a place many of the prisoners referred to as "Hellmira." He remained there until June 27, 1865 when he signed the Oath of Allegiance, repatriating him to the United States. He was then released to return home.

Following his return, William started farming and he and his wife Evelina B. Hodges started a family. By the time of the 1880 U.S. Census, William and Evelina had five children, ranging from 6 to 18 years old. The family lived in the Licking Hole District of the county, approximately

one mile west of Gum Spring. William died on May 8, 1901 and was buried in the family cemetery, located near the end of Cooley Road. On December 8, 1932, his oldest daughter Sarah Slayden Layne applied for and received a Confederate headstone for his grave. Evelina lived until 1910; the U.S. Census for that year lists her as living with her widowed daughter Sarah Layne. William's Confederate marker is the only headstone in the Slayden Family Cemetery. As in many family cemeteries, the other graves are marked only by a depression in the earth.

~ By Richard Toler



TIME TO ORDER THE 2024 CEMETERY BOOK!

The 4th edition of *Gravesites and Cemeteries of Goochland County, Virginia* is at the printer. This new edition will contain 485 new names, as well as nine new family cemeteries; these additions bring the total number of names to around 9,600 and the total number of cemeteries and gravesites to 370. GCHS Vice-President Richard Toler has overseen the development of the guide.

We are always on the lookout for as yet undiscovered names and cemeteries/gravesites. If you have a cemetery on your property or know of one elsewhere, please notify the GCHS, so we can document its location.

Over the years, the various editions of *Gravesites and Cemeteries of Goochland County, Virginia* have been consistent best sellers in the GCHS gift shop. If you wish to reserve a copy of the new 2024 (4th) edition, please contact the society. Cost is \$35.00.



Goochland County Historical Society

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Exhibit: D-Day 80 Years Later

Now through August 31, Items and photographs of the men who served the county during World War II.

