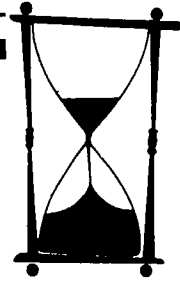


# The Messenger

Number 11, April 1987



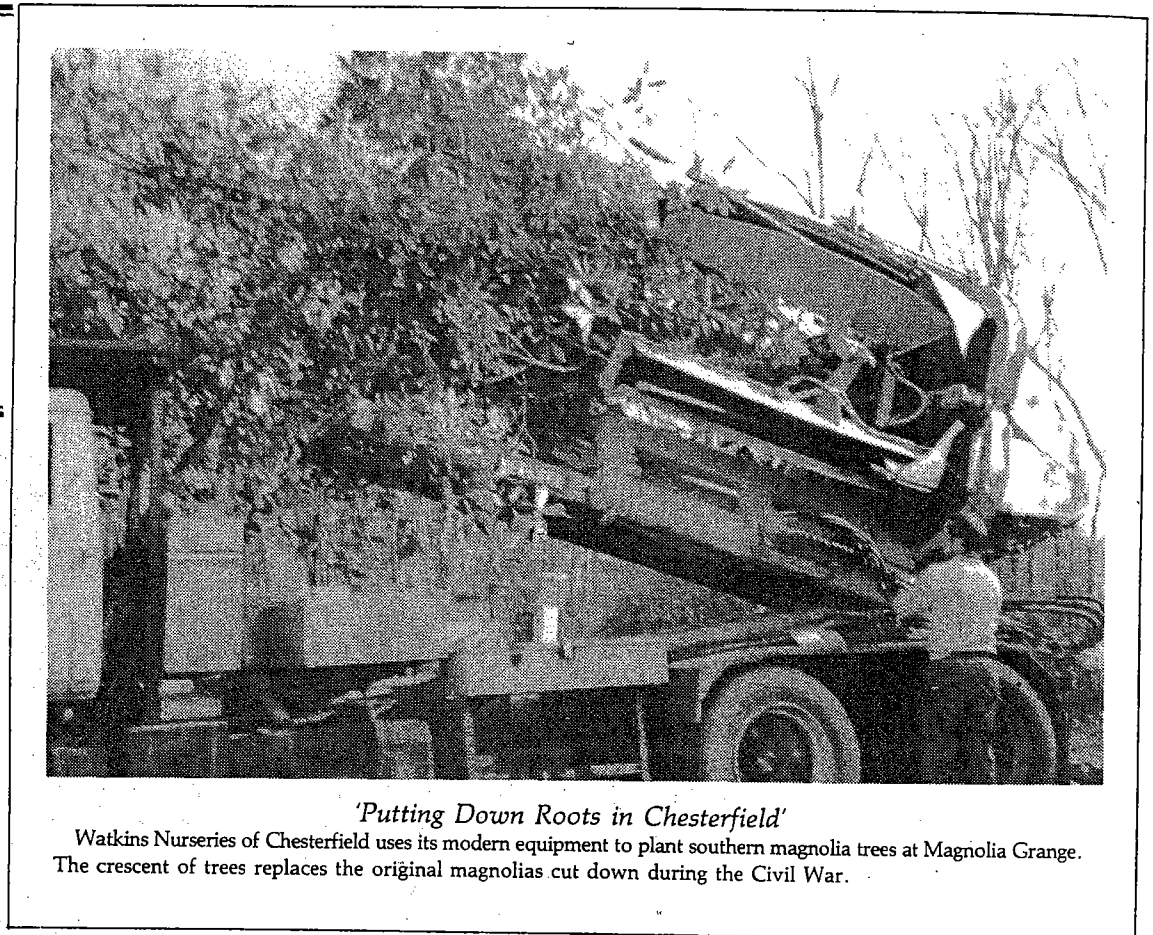
The Chesterfield Historical Society of Virginia, P.O. Box 40, Chesterfield Courthouse, Virginia 23832

## Quarterly Meeting Set April 26 at Mt. Hermon

The next quarterly meeting of the Chesterfield Historical Society will be held on Sunday, April 26 at 3:00 P.M. at Mt. Hermon Baptist Church, 18100 Genito Road. The church is at the intersection of Genito and Mt. Hermon Roads, approximately 8 miles west of Route 360.

The topic of the meeting will be "History of Electric Streetcar Service in Chesterfield County and Richmond," presented by W. Earl Long and Carlton N. McKenney. Along with the lecture will be a color slide presentation including photographs of Richmond streetcars, as well as antique hand-colored postcards of area streetcars.

Rev. George A. Fleming, pastor of Mt. Hermon Baptist



*'Putting Down Roots in Chesterfield'*

Watkins Nurseries of Chesterfield uses its modern equipment to plant southern magnolia trees at Magnolia Grange. The crescent of trees replaces the original magnolias cut down during the Civil War.

Church, will present a brief history of the old church from its beginnings in 1835. Mt. Hermon is one of the few antebellum churches still standing in Chesterfield. The old cemetery will be open for tours.

## Chesterfield Historical Society Receives AASLH Recognition

The Chesterfield Historical Society has won a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History for rapid development of a local history program.

The American Association for State and Local History conferred the award at its annual meeting in Oakland, California, on September 29, 1986. The association's awards program is

the nation's most prestigious recognition for local history achievement. Only three such awards were given in Virginia. A national selection committee, composed of leaders in the history profession, reviewed 147 nominations. Twenty-three awards of merit and seventy-three certificates of commendation were awarded to individuals, institutions, and historical organizations across the United States and Canada.

### QUARTERLY MEETING

Sunday, April 26

*"Electric Streetcar Service In Chesterfield & Richmond"*

Mt. Hermon Baptist Church

18100 Genito Road

Eight Miles West of Route 360

3:00 p.m.

# 'Some Things I Remember'

## The River

by Ashton Hatcher

*Ashton Hatcher was born December 8, 1890. Blessed with a keen memory of childhood events, she has collected her recollections in a two-book manuscript now located at the Historical Society. "The River" is a portion of this text.*

"Children these days watch the clock so as to know when their favorite program will be shown on television. With us, we looked to see if it was time for the Pocahontas, or Brandon, or Berkeley, or the Gulf Stream, or other regular boats to come by our house. The Pocahontas was our favorite -- a side-wheeler that churned up the muddy water. She made three round trips to Norfolk each week. She left Richmond on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings at around eight, and returned Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday afternoons. The time she passed our place varied with the number and length of stops she made. She carried passengers as well as cargo and was really quite a pretty boat. When she was being worked on (for a time she burned), a smaller sidewheeler called the Mobjack took her place. [I saw the Mobjack in the New York harbor one time.] We called the Pocahontas "Poky" for short (not connected with her speed, which was pretty good) and loved her as though she was a real person, something that belonged to us.

The Brandon and Berkeley were identical, or almost so. [We claimed we liked the Berkeley best]. These were night boats and each night one of them would pass our house at about 8:20 p.m. In summer time we lined up in front of the house and called for the captain to "turn on your search light". He usually did, considering he had to look out for the big rocks just below the house. One night,

Rita, not yet able to talk well, called out "turn on your shirt light". This was often repeated later by some of us older ones. When Lillian was teaching at Claremont, she met one of the captains (of the Berkeley, I believe) who said, "I remember you children; which were you?". Then he made signs of height from taller to shorter.

One day, the Brandon did not make the turn properly just about where the cut now

is, between the VEPCO plant and Coxendale, and ran aground in what we call the bay (low land). I went down to see it and was able to stand on a tree root and touch the prow. It took several tugs at high tide to free her.

The Gulf Stream only came up the river on Saturdays. I think it was an oil tanker. At any rate, it wasn't pretty or as interesting as the passenger boats. There were also tugs

that towed barges. The Richmond Cedar Works was one of these. Families lived on some of the barges and we children used to see them hanging up clothes or walking around.

In summer time the Pocahontas, after docking and unloading following her Saturday trip, took on social groups for an excursion. They went through Dutch Gap, turned around in the wide water there, and returned.



The Hatcher children are pictured around 1904: (back row) Ashton, Leslie, Evelyn, (front row) Lillian, Florence, and Rita.

We could see the people dancing or talking together in groups or in pairs. They seemed to be having a good time. Sometimes they waved to us. When the Jamestown Exposition (1907) was held in Norfolk, Papa and Mamma arranged to take the family to visit it. We went to Grandmother's (she herself was in Norfolk, at Uncle Shirley's), spent the night, and made it to the docks. We went down the river on the Pocahontas. We thoroughly enjoyed it. When we came back on Saturday, Papa arranged for one of the farm men to meet the boat at Meadowville and take us home. However, a terrific storm came up and the captain said that we children should not get off. He invited the family to go on to Richmond. Papa told the man to meet us the next day in Chester, and we spent another night in Grandmother's house. I went to Norfolk one night on the Berkeley or Brandon later, when I was teaching in Chester. A fellow teacher and I went sight seeing in the area. Uncle Shirley met us and took us to breakfast. The school principal and his cousin were on the boat also, so we had a good time. Leslie was living on the farm then and came out in a row boat to meet us. Several other times I rode down the river and always enjoyed it.

The river also afforded us other entertainment -- fishing in particular. I never liked it much, but sometimes I sat still long enough to catch a catfish or so. The others loved it. Mamma did not approve of our getting out in row boats, so it was not until we were grown up that any of us did much in that line. Several summers after we had moved to Chester, we arranged camping parties at the farm, and Lillian, in particular, went out in boats.

I liked to just watch the water, note the ebb and flow of the tide, and imagine the things that went on. We often saw water birds not common to the area. When we were quite young, Uncle Shirley would make bark boats for us and put sails on them. We loved to watch them go down the river, out of site.

When we were young, oyster sloops would pass by going on to Richmond to sell their cargo. These were sailing vessels that used the wind to propel them from one side of the river to the other, working with wind and tide. Sometimes they made good time. A "tack" would send them quite a distance. One time Papa arranged to go to Richmond with the captain of one of them. I wept. I was sure that he would drown. The several grownups (I don't remember who they were) consoled me as best they could, but I knew something would happen to him. The next morning he came walking home. The wind had given out just around the next "reach" and, as they were near the Chesterfield shore line, he had them row him to shore and he walked home. I was sure glad to see him.

Evelyn often had to stay with Grandmother when the malaria was rampant. One time Papa arranged for the captain of the Thomas Cunningham tug to take Mamma, baby Lillian, and Evelyn to Richmond. He took them in a row boat to meet the tug, and they went on. Evelyn stayed, and Mamma and Lillian came out on the train and were met in Chester later.

The oyster sloops often sold Papa some oysters in the shell. He would get a barrel or less and we would keep them in cold weather a week. Every now and then we would pour salt water over them and listen to them "clack, clack".

Fortunately "river rats"

## Gifts Received by the Chesterfield Museum

Since last Messenger

Portrait: General Edward Johnson - gift of J.E.B. Stuart Camp, Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Portrait: General David A. Weisiger, gift of George E. Pickett Camp, Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Portrait: General Henry Heth - Gift of Central Virginia Relic Hunters Association.

Portrait: General Young M. Moody - gift of A.P. Hill Camp, Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Shoe buttoner - gift of Olin L. Taylor

Flax hook - gift of Mr. and Mrs. C. Garnett

Ice pick from ruins of Old Bon Air Hotel - gift of Mr. Samuel W. Sutton

Reproduction letter from Lord Chesterfield to his godson - gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Harold

Bed ticks for Old Jail cells - gift of Chester Junior Women's Club.

American flag with 32 stars, dated 1858 - gift of Mr. Mike Jernigan.

Fire bell from old Manchester Fire Station, from horse drawn fire wagon - gift of Mr. Garland L. Wells.

Souvenir: Chester High School, 1906 - 1907 - gift of Miss Ashton Hatcher.

Milk can and egg basket - gift of Mr. Angus Goode

Display case of old sewing machine needles - gift of Mr. Jerry Kambourian.

1915 Gold Medal Flour Cook Book - gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Harold.

Nutmeg grater and lemon squeezer - gift of Mr. Marvin Reed.

## Cash Gifts Received from Friends

CSX Corporation, Mr. and Mrs. Preston Holmes, The Lind Lawrence Foundation, Philip Morris, Inc.

were not as prevalent then as they are now, and we were seldom troubled by them. In fact, we seemed to be quite safe in our neck of land. One day, however, several men came up the bank in front of the house begging. One was lame and one walked slowly. They wanted food. Papa had no patience with beggars and called for one of the hands to hitch up the wagon to take them to the Courthouse for help. The men turned and ran -- the lame man wasn't lame at all; he kept up with the others. Papa looked over the bank and there was a boat

load of men, rapidly pulling away from shore."

## Congressman Bliley Presents Flag Which Flew Over Capitol

Congressman Thomas Bliley has presented an American flag to the Chesterfield Historical Society. To be displayed before the historical society offices, the flag originally flew over the U.S. Capitol in Washington on August 8, 1986, especially in honor of the Chesterfield Historical Society.

