

# THE MESSENGER

JULY 1993 - NUMBER 25

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



## QUARTERLY MEETING JULY 25th

Sunday, July 25th promises to be another banner day in the life of the Historical Society. One of our own members, Dr. Wyatt Osborne, will speak to us and show slides on the colonial town of Osbornes. Today only Osborne Road survives to mark the site of this pre-Revolutionary tobacco port. Please come and hear of his research into this colonial river town.

To complement Dr. Osborne's lecture, our Archaeology Committee under Dawn Burns' leadership, will exhibit some exciting artifacts recently recovered from the site.

In addition, it is time to elect new officers for the upcoming two years. So plan to attend to help us say thank you to our faithful outgoing officers and to say welcome to the new ones.

Remember, 2:30 PM in the Old Courthouse!

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## IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR

## MEMBERSHIP!

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## Society to Elect New Officers

An important portion of our July 25th meeting will be the nomination and election of new officers. The deadline to nominate an individual in advance for the office of president, first vice-president, second vice-president,

recording secretary, treasurer, corresponding secretary or one of the seven directors' positions is July 16.

Chesterfield Historical Society President Gordon Jonas said that the nominating process is outlined in the Society's by-laws. Nominations are compiled by the Society's Nominating Committee, which will present the complete slate of nominees at the July 25 meeting.

At that time, the committee also will take nominations of individuals from the floor, providing they are made with the individual's prior consent.

-Submitted by Pam Wiley

## OUR MUSEUMS NEED YOU!

The Chesterfield County Museum, Magnolia Grange, the Historic Courthouse, and the Old Jail need you!

On weekdays, it takes a total of eight volunteers to fully staff our facilities each day - that's 40 people a week! In addition four guides are needed on Sundays to give tours at the County Museum and Magnolia Grange: A grand total of forty-four people a week!

Where are you? Needless to say, we need your help. By joining the Chesterfield Historical Society you have shown an interest in our County's rich heritage and its preservation. Now you can take that interest and pride one step further by sharing your love of history and our museum facilities to visitors to our beautiful community.

Currently, guides and docents are needed at all of our sites for afternoon as well as morning and Sunday shifts.

This is a fantastic opportunity to

meet new people, learn more about Chesterfield, and serve your community ... and, it can take as little as eight hours a month!

Help tell our history! For more information on volunteering, call Jennifer Wright at 748-1026.

## James River Batteau Festival

The route has been pretty much the same for eight years, but each year it's a different trip... always an enjoyable one, though. On June 12, members of the Batteau Committee left Lynchburg for their annual run to Maidens Landing in the eighth annual James River Batteau Festival.

Built in 1986 in what is now Chesterfield Towne Center, the Lord Chesterfield batteau is a full-scale replica of batteaux or flat-bottomed 18th century cargo boats discovered a couple of years ago during canal excavations in Richmond. While it has required some off-season repairs and modifications, the Lord Chesterfield remains one of only three replica bateaux that have been part of the festival since its start.

The festival traces the route used by watermen who transported tobacco and other crops from rural areas to port cities such as Richmond. The Lord Chesterfield crew traveled in tandem with friends on the batteau Appomattox, another charter festival batteau.

Low water and head winds kept Captain Paul Kreynus and crew members occupied for the first three days of the journey. Having been spoiled by last year's higher water level, the group was re-introduced to poling the boat, rather than letting the current carry them along, and to picking

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up of the crew of the Lord Chesterfield Batteau guided by Captain Paul Kreynus. The boat and her crew are just drying off from their latest adventures on the river and they are willing to share the secrets of *The Boatman's Belly* with us land lubbers. This book, compiled by crew members Will Turnage and Pam Wiley, presents authentic boatman's recipes and reveals the answers to the questions that are asked above. The proceeds from the book, which costs \$5.00, go towards maintenance costs of the batteau. For good recipes and fun reading get your first edition copy of *The Boatman's Belly* available now at the Historical Society.

Hugh Goodwyn is the Picture Collection. Over the years he has compiled, maintained, and displayed an interesting visual history of Chesterfield County. Up until now the collection could only be viewed at special Society or county events. All that will change this Fall when *A Time to Remember: A Pictorial History of Chesterfield County, Virginia, 1860-1960* will be available for purchase in October.

Society members will receive a special mailing concerning purchase of the book in the near future. Hugh is seeking volunteers to help market the book beyond the Society's membership. If you can help in this area please contact him at the Historical Society, 748-1026.

-Contributed by Jeanette Ortiz

## FROM OUR RECORDING SECRETARY...

On Sunday afternoon, April 25th, members of the Chesterfield Historical Society gathered along the shore of the James River at Bermuda Hundred to take a ferry ride across to Turkey Island, the site of the 18th and 19th-century Randolph plantation "Presquile". The ferry ride was not to be, however, due to the invasion of strong winds all afternoon. So we settled down on the Bermuda Hundred shore, with magnificent Shirley Plantation staring at us from across the river, and began our spring general

meeting. After an announcement by Lucille Moseley of upcoming society events, such as Plantation Day and the Norfolk trip in May, and Baxter Perkinson's comments remembering one of Chesterfield's confederate officers, Jim Daniels introduced the day's speaker. Dr. L. Daniel Mouer, director of VCU's archaeology program, presented a fascinating talk on the history of Bermuda Hundred, based on the documentary record as well as archaeological remains.

In the 1980's Dr. Mouer had done considerable excavation at several Bermuda Hundred sites, and from aerial views had located Sir Thomas Dale's 1613 palisade in the fields behind Allied Chemical. He spoke extensively of his experiences during those VCU field school summers, presenting details of what information came to light during the excavations. We learned about the earliest settlement of 1613, the stores and taverns which operated at the site during the 17th century, the laying out of the town in the 1690's by Randolph and Eppes, and the role of the port during the 18th and early 19th-centuries. Also discussed was the early 19th century business of free black merchants Henry and Archibald Batte, and the post-Civil War settlement of Bermuda Hundred by recently freed slaves. Dr. Mouer was able to place all of the history he discussed into the surrounding landscape. It left a great impression of continuity of the land that was lost on no one.

At the conclusion of the meeting, we all enjoyed refreshments provided by Jeff Grau from Harry's 12th Street Grill & Fine Dining.

-Submitted by Paul Shelton

## HERB GARDEN PLANTED AT MAGNOLIA GRANGE

Before the days of modern chemical concoctions, our ancestors regularly used natural herbs for many household purposes. A newly planted herb garden at Magnolia Grange contains examples of the various plants commonly used by our ancestors.

The garden, divided into four categories, contains medicinal, culinary, fragrant, and insecticidal herbs such as

were popularly used in the 18th and 19th centuries. It contains 50 different varieties of such plants commonly grown on self-sufficient plantations that were located far from towns that had apothecaries and general stores.

The old time medicinal plants were called "simples" because they were simple remedies for simple ills and injuries. Common plants were horehound used for coughs, peppermint for an upset stomach and camomile to induce sleep.

Herbs were used to disguise decaying meats, tansy was wrapped around meat to keep flies away and orris root and violet powder were used to powder wigs. Lemon balm was used to polish furniture, while ladies found rosemary to be an excellent "beauty treatment" as an astringent.

The garden was a gift to us from Kathy and Rusty Chain, proprietors of "The Herbs of Happy Hill", a Chester garden shop. They designed the garden, donated all the plants, and put them in the ground! What a nice contribution! We are so grateful for their generosity and support and we invite all of you to come and see the garden soon!

## THANK YOU!

*We wish to thank the following members and friends who have contributed to our collections:*

### To Our Museum:

J. M. Harvey - 5 pieces of scrip from W.R. Barrow's Store of the Midlothian Coal Company, 1866 - 1882.

Tad Kerby - 2 pieces of track from the Chesterfield Railroad, the gravity railroad of the Midlothian Coal Mines.

### To Magnolia Grange:

Richard Gates - child's shoe, circa 1850 - 1880.

Helen Perkins - pair of school slates, circa 1900.

### To Our Library:

Mrs. Winston D. Alston - Manuscripts: Gill Family Papers,

1865 - 1941 and Adkins Family Papers, 1803 - 1953.

Walter L. Boyd - Book: Ancestors and Descendants of Francis Epes I of Virginia.

Carlton Stuart Clarke - Clarke Family Genealogical Charts, 1769 - 1904.

Stephen Kaufman - Manuscripts: 1) Information on the Gregory Family; 2) Information on the Gill Family; 3) Autobiography of Rosena Harriet Gill Gregory.

Donna K. Schneider - Index to the 1888 LaPrade Map of Chesterfield.

## Welcome New Members!

The Chesterfield Historical Society wishes to welcome new members who have joined between February 22 - June 30, 1993:

Kathy Chain, James Vernon Epps, Dorothy R. Epps, John T. Fierst, Michael G. Goode, Evelyn J. Gray, Christine Lalich, Carl E. Lightfoot, Gwendolyn G. Lightfoot, M. Sue Peek, Jennifer Perry, Fred Ridout, Charles N. Thompson, Jr., Phyllis H. Twinney, Barbara A. Veillon

## QUERIES

The Cemetery Committee requests your help with the following query:

Daniel Thomas Belcher, married 1 April 1826 to Sally Vaden, Chesterfield County, VA. He died in Petersburg, VA.

Issue: John George, b.1829  
Lucy, b.1831  
Eliza, b. 1836  
Rachel, b. 1842  
Frances, b. 1847

"My great great grandfather, the above John George Belcher, went to Australia for the gold rush, married and stayed. I am researching the family and am interested in any information before and after 1826 - particularly day to day life of these people." If you can help please contact:

Mr. John A. Hunter, GPO Box 1539, Brisbane QLD, Australia, 4001

## Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Sustaining Membership (\$100 per yr.)

Family Membership (\$25 per yr.)

Couple Membership (\$20 per yr.)

Single Membership (\$12 per yr.)

Student Membership (\$5 per yr.)

Corporate Membership (\$500 per yr.)

Please make check payable to the Chesterfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 40, Chesterfield, VA 23832

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