

# The Messenger

OF THE CHESTERFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

Issue Number 44

April 1998

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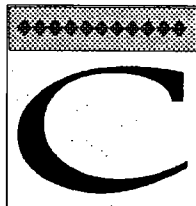
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What we hope  
ever to do with ease,  
we must learn first  
to do with diligence.  
—Samuel Johnson (1709-84)

98chsnf2.pub

*by: nancy carter crump*

# Castlewood's Re-birth



Castlewood, one of Chesterfield County's architectural gems, has come under the Historical Society's management, adding a fifth site to the historic buildings in the courthouse area now open for tours. The Society's offices will be relocated there sometime in June, with the library and gift shop remaining in the 1917 Courthouse, at least for the foreseeable future.

Begun ca 1816 by long-time county clerk (1812-1847), Parke Poindexter, Castlewood is considered to be one of the finest Federal-period houses in Chesterfield County. It features a formal, five-part plan unlike "that of any other recorded Virginia dwelling."<sup>1</sup> The house stands on approximately six acres on the north side of Ironbridge road, where its unusual design has attracted passers-by for nearly two-hundred years.

As part of the Historical Society's long-range plan, still in development, Castlewood will be part of a walking tour emphasizing the social, legal, economic, and religious life of the nineteenth-century community that once existed here. Other educational and interpretive programs are being developed to enhance the visitor experience at Castlewood, with full details to follow in the near future.

1. O'Dell, p. 298-passim

**Chesterfield  
Historical Society  
Officers**

President — T. Palmer Condrey

1st Vice-President - Rebecca Badger

2nd Vice-President - Doris M. Hancock

Recording Secretary - Susan Poe

Corresponding Secretary - Tamara Puster

Treasurer — David Brown

**Directors**

Fay Myers Cecil,

Charles Gray, Russell Harris,  
Laurie Horner, Mary P. Humphrey,

Rachel Lipowicz,

Horace "Pete" Mann, III

Marshall Pearman, Bettie Weaver

**Staff**

Nancy Carter Crump,  
Executive Director

James W. Hollomon,  
Assistant Director

Tamara Puster, Gift Shop Manager

Cristin Butler, Intern

**Hours  
of  
Operation**

All Museums

10:00 A.M. — 4:00 P.M.

Monday-Wednesday & Friday  
1:00 P.M. — 4:00 P.M. on Sunday

Call (804) 748-1026 for Information

**Editor**

Mason T. Chalkley

**Contributing  
Editors**

Nancy Carter Crump  
Jim Hollomon

# MUSEUM MOMENTS

By: Jim Hollomon  
Assistant Director of Museums

**A**s we move forward into spring, our Museums continue to clatter with the feet of Chesterfield County second-graders. For anyone who is interested, we can still use help at all of our sites, providing tours to school groups and filling regular shifts for off-the-street visitors.

Amidst the hordes of children on-site each day, the County Museum continues making small changes, upgrading and enhancing the facility. 1998's exhibit schedule opened in January with "Recent Acquisitions" featuring many of the most recent gifts which have been donated to the museum. Officially opening on April 13th will be a new exhibit, "Native Americans: Chesterfield's First Residents." It will feature Native American artifacts from the Chesterfield area, all are on loan to us from the Department of Historic Resources. For all those who still have not seen the museum's new changing-exhibit gallery, this will be a great chance to come out and take a close look.

The basement of the County Museum has also undergone some transformations. Some of the old cases have been removed to make way for an enlarged exhibit and storage area downstairs. Most of the artifacts may now be stored in one location on proper shelving in a more climate-controlled area. The objects can also be better secured in the basement storage. Many thanks go out to Newton Webb, Pete Mann, and especially Dr. George Partin for all their assistance and dedication to get sixteen sets of shelves put together for the new storage area.

Shelving is a real necessity for a storage area so that most everything can be kept up off the floor. This became very evident in our Museum basement two weeks ago. Apparently due to the abnormal amounts of rain, saturated grounds, and possibly a clogged drain, we had a flood in the

continued on page 4

**Chesterfield Historical Society  
Spring Quarterly Meeting**

**Sunday, April 26, 1998  
2:00 P.M.**

*at the*

**1917 Courthouse**

*Topic:*

**Chesterfield County's Third Courthouse**

*Featuring:*

**Elliott DeMerell, Master's candidate, V.C.U.,  
Art History: "Courthouses of Chesterfield County"**

**John Boykin, Assistant Director, General Services,  
Chesterfield County: "Phase I, 1917 Courthouse Renovation"**

**Honorable Earnest P. Gates, Retired Judge, 12th Judicial Circuit  
Court, Chesterfield County: "Reflections on the 1917 Courthouse"**

*Address:*

***10011 Iron Bridge Road  
Refreshments will be served***

**FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

### The Courthouse Gift Shop

If you are looking for unique gifts for special friends or family, then visit our gift shop and examine all the new items on display just for you.

—Tamara Puster

**Remember us for your Spring and Wedding gifts.\***

Official hours are 10-4, Monday through Friday, with additional hours by appointment. Call the office at 748-1026 for more information.

\* Bridal registry available

### Courthouse Renovation Begins

In preparation for the county's 250th anniversary celebration which will get underway in May, 1999, Phase I of the 1917 Courthouse renovation has begun. This first phase focuses on the main courtroom, and includes removal of the ceiling acoustical tile, as well as replacement of the heating and air-conditioning systems. The original pine flooring lies underneath linoleum that apparently was installed in an earlier renovation of the building; the wood flooring will be refinished before Venetian blinds and period globe lights are added. Pews now used for seating in the courtroom will be replaced by theater seats dating from the early 1900s, and identical to those that were used in the courthouse originally. Phase I is due to be completed by July 1 of this year when the Juvenile Court will resume use of the building on Tuesdays and Thursday each week. Come by to see the work in progress!

—nancy carter crump

### Reminder

Our membership year runs from January 1 through December 31 of each year, so your membership fees were due in January for 1998. It is easy to overlook your payment, but we do need your financial support and would appreciate you checking that checkbook to make sure you have not missed that small payment. For those who have forwarded their selected payment, we appreciate and thank you for your promptness.

—Doris Hancock, Membership Chair

### Gifts

*We thank the following individuals and organizations that have made monetary or in-kind donations to the Chesterfield Historical Society during the first three months of the year:*

Blankenburg, Kenneth  
Bon Air Woman's Club  
Chesterfield County Balck History Committee  
Cook, J.B.  
Davis, F. Hampton  
DuBose, Martha  
Grady, Mr. & Mrs. Ellis  
Hilbert, Mr. & Mrs. Sam  
Hobson, Clare  
Hooper, Hona  
Matthews, Diane  
Matthews, Elizabeth J.  
Ridder, Marilyn  
Robertson, May Rose  
Rooks, James R.  
Tarry, Mr. & Mrs. Samuel  
Wallace, Margaret  
Wilderman, Angela  
Woodland Pond Garden Club  
(toward restoration of the "Pank" portrait)

Museum Moments cont'd.

basement. It was discovered one morning upon my arrival as I went over to open up the Museum. A full day was spent - on into the evening, working with County staff, cleaning up the mess, and locating the problem. It is something I can look back at and joke about now - such as our very own swimming pool in the basement, but, it was not very funny at the time. It was a comfort to see, though, that there was fast and complete cooperation with the County maintenance staff to get the problem in hand and under control. Many thanks for their help.

\* \* \* \* \*

A good **volunteer** is much like a Timex watch — but rather than take a beating and still keep on ticking, they heed the need, then plead to proceed with the deed in order to succeed at what they agreed — all work guarenteed!

—Mason T. Chalkley



**WELCOME  
TO  
OUR  
NEW  
MEMBERS**

**W**e welcome the new members who have joined the Chesterfield Historical Society between January 16 and March 31, 1998:

- Charles E. Brownell, III**
- Ann & Phil Burks**
- Paul S. Clay**
- Mr. & Mrs. John Cogbill, III**
- Nellie Ashby Collins**
- Maureen & Gerald Demers**
- Gwen Denzler DuVall**
- Christine Eastham**
- Dr. Paula L. Hylton**
- Theresa B. Janca**
- Thomas P. Kidd**
- Bonnie Kniska**
- Charlotte & Bernard LaRoy**
- Barbara & Robert Miller**
- Ivy & K.C. Phillips & daughters,**
- Tara & Jennifer**
- Elizabeth & Randy Robertson**
- Stella Sromalski**
- James Stegmaier**
- R.L. Stern**
- Joyce E. Van Etten**
- Joyce & William Watkins**
- Mary E. Westfall**
- Charlene Wheeler**



**Spring Tour Time!**

Springtime is tour time in the Old Dominion! Mark your calendars for the following:

**May 29, 30, 31**

Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation tour: A journey through the Life of Patrick Henry. Attendees can participate in one to three days, visiting sites related to the 18th-century figure who contributed to America's freedom. Call (804) 376-2647 for further information.

**June 20**

Virginia Chapter, Victorian Society of America:  
Victorian Smithfield.

\*\*\*\*\*

**VICTORIAN SOCIETY JUNE TOUR**

Join the Victorian Society's Virginia chapter for its late Spring tour to Smithfield between 11:00 and 3:00 on Saturday, June 20th. Refreshments at The Mansion on Main, a Victorian Bed & Breakfast located in the heart of Smithfield's historic district will be followed by a guided walking tour before lunch, to be served at the 18th-century Smithfield Inn. The day will end with a visit to the wonderful Queen Anne-style Gwaltney house, a private residence built at the turn of the century and still lived in by descendants of the original builder.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Wedding Postponement**

The DuVal-Robertson Wedding has been postponed this year due to unforeseen circumstances. Plans now are to re-schedule this event for June, 1999 as part of the County's 250th Anniversary celebration.

## Chesterfield Historical Society Committee Reports



Judy Worthington, Chesterfield's Circuit Court Clerk, is committed to preserving the historical records entrusted to her care. The Clerk's Office maintains marriage-register information for Chesterfield County from 1749, the year of the County's inception, to the present. Due to limited funding, the Circuit Court Clerk's records preservation efforts focus on those records most in need of repair. The Marriage Register dating from 1853 to 1896 is considered a high-risk record due to its vulnerability and poor physical condition. Pages in the Register are brittle, faded, torn and in danger of losing all legibility if not preserved immediately. The Register, accessed daily by genealogists, the general public, and Clerk's Office staff, contains historical data vital to chronicle the lives and genealogical history of Chesterfield families. A project is currently underway to re-index this Register in order to preserve the information contained therein.

When planning this project, it was necessary to ensure compatibility with systems currently in use. Logan Systems, Inc. (LSI) supports and manages all the Court's index and image data, and provides back-up and disaster recovery services for all such data. The Clerk's Office contracted with LSI to develop similar software with which to re-index the Marriage Register. LSI is supplying the necessary hardware and software, all consumables, and system training. The vendor will also provide off-site disaster recovery of backup data via tape, thereby ensuring permanent preservation of these vital records.

Clerk's staff perform all data-entry duties associated with this project, thereby securing greater control over production. Like all current indexes, the new index will be carefully proofread for errors. Many entries in the Marriage Register contain handwriting that is difficult to interpret. Members of the Historical Society have offered to assist in deciphering the most complex entries. The Clerk's Office appreciates this offer of assistance and will take advantage of this generosity as deemed necessary.

The Register includes the names, ages, and marital status of the bride and groom, names of their parents, their place of residence, their place of birth, the groom's occupation, the date and place of marriage, and the officiator's name. The new index will include all information found in the original. Due to the poor condition of the original record, however, some information cannot be accurately and completely reflected in the new index. Consequently, the original Register will be available for perusal at any time, although it will be retired from active use and stored in an acid-free container. The new index will clearly indicate whether the researcher should consult the original record. When researchers write to the Clerk for marriage information found in this Register, they will receive a certified extract of the information. The final index print will be very similar to indexes currently available in the Record Room. It is estimated that the project will be completed by the autumn of 1998.

The Circuit Court Clerk's Office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mrs. Worthington appreciates the Historical Society's interest in the records maintained in the Clerk's Office and she encourages Society members to take advantage of *all* resources available in the Circuit Court Record Room

This is a summary report from the **Genealogical Committee** by Angie Wilderman. Look for more in the next Messenger edition.

### Chesterfield Historical Society Calendar-of-Events April - June, 1998

April (see flyer for dates):	Heritage Craft Classes @ Magnolia Grange
Monday, April 13 (1 PM):	Exhibit Opening, "Native Americans: Chesterfield's First Residents." @ Chesterfield County Museum
Tuesday, April 21 (11-4 PM):	Woodland Pond Garden Club Flower Show @ Magnolia Grange
Sunday, April 26 (2 PM):	Quarterly Meeting @ 1917 Courthouse
Saturday, May 16 (2 PM):	Ft. Wead & Howlett Line Sites Dedication @ Ft. Wead
June (dates TBA):	CHS office will move to Castlewood

## VOLUNTEER NEWS!

Welcome to new volunteers who have joined us in recent months: Annie Mann, Kathie Lyon, Virginia Frymeier, Brenda Boggs, Pamela Voss, Ed and Lu Henderson, and Charlene Ward.

\*\*\*\*\*



Fourteen CHS members and volunteers helped in the recent WCVE-TV fund drive on March 9th. Manning the WCVE telephones between 7 and 11 P.M. were Beverly Coleman, CHS President Palmer Condrey, Nancy Carter Crump, Jim Emory, Doris Hancock, Russell Harris, Shirley Hudson, Donna Link, Kathie Lyon, Annie & Pete Mann, Betty Matthews, Susan Poe, and Marcella Williamson. The evening was fun, with phones ringing steadily, good food provided by the television station - - and enjoyed by our hungry crowd - - along with a chance to meet and talk with other members of the Society. And we actually got pledges!

\*\*\*\*\*

On Thursday, February 26th, Spring Training was held for our interpreters. Fifteen new and veteran volunteers participated in a session concentrating on customer service and back-to-basics. Informative discussion was followed by lunch (which was provided). After some socializing, site tours were conducted. A good time was had by all who attended.

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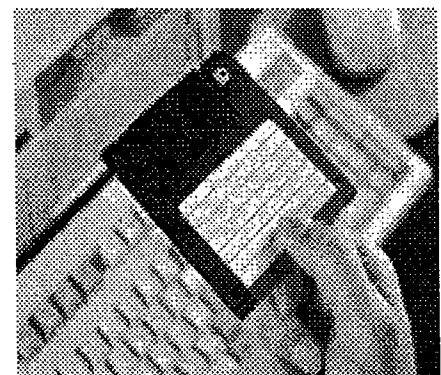
For those who came to the training session, there was an added bonus. On March 25th and 26th, there was an opportunity to go on a behind-the-scenes

tour at Colonial Williamsburg, along with some of our other key volunteers. The tour included the new collections facilities and conservation labs, a private visit to the Brush-Everard House, and a special tour of the Wallace Gallery. The day-long trip included lunch at one of the colonial taverns. The weather cooperated and this made for two delightful days.

For those of you who did not attend the training session, keep this in mind for future programs offered to docents. More opportunities such as the Williamsburg trips will be forthcoming as incentives for you to keep actively involved with the Society.



*We would like to make this column a regular feature of The Messenger, but need help to keep it going. Please call Nancy or Jim at 748-1026 if you would like to try your hand at writing for us.*



**Membership Application**  
(Membership Year: January 1 - December 31)

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

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

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Student Membership \$5.00 per year
- \_\_\_\_\_ Single Membership \$12.00 per year
- \_\_\_\_\_ Couple Membership \$20.00 per year
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family Membership \$25.00 per year
- \_\_\_\_\_ Corporate Membership \$500.00 per year
- \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ New Member

- \_\_\_\_\_ Two Years \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Individual Life \$200.00 (one-time)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Hours of Operation**  
All Museums  
10:00 A.M. — 4:00 P.M.  
Monday — Wednesday & Friday  
1:00 P.M. — 4:00 P.M. on Sunday  
Telephone (804) 748-1026

Return to:

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

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