

# The Messenger of the Chesterfield Historical Society of Virginia

Number 5

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## News Notes:

On November 22, 1983, the Chesterfield Historical Society had its day in court. Margaret Burgess, Mr. L.L. Cashion, and Pattie Grady testified on behalf of Pheeby Walthall, born 1698 and died 175-. The Roper Development Company had petitioned the court to move Pheeby's grave and large tombstone from their in progress subdivision, Mistwood. The Society's position was to leave the grave untouched and to have an archeological survey of the area to determine the historical significance of the site and to determine if any other graves are there. Articles written about the case appeared in the Chesterfield Gazette, the Times-Dispatch, and twice made the front page of Petersburg's Progress Index. A petition is being presented to the court to have an archeological survey done. Judge John Daffron has not yet ruled on the case. As a result of the publicity on Pheeby's grave, Mr. Robert Jackson gave a Wilkinson tombstone to the Society and Museum (see article in this issue).

Negotiations have been under way since November, 1983, with Mr. C. Porter Vaughan for the purpose of turning Magnolia Grange into a museum for the people of Chesterfield County. It has been a long and difficult process that is not yet resolved.

As Chairman for the Spring House Tour, Charlotte Farley reports the following: "Mark May 19, 1984, on your calendar as the day you are going to tour our historic houses and sites in the Centralia and Chester Areas. More information will be coming soon."

The Society is pleased to announce that as of March 1, 1984, its library will be open for researchers. With a staff of eight trained volunteers, it is now open to the public on Tuesdays from 10 until 2 and on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12 until 4. Donations are still sought of family Bible records, genealogical material, photographs, and other items of interest on Chesterfield County and its families.

New officers were presented at the October meeting by the nominating committee and accepted by the members of the Society. They are:

President - Lucille C. Moseley  
First Vice-President - Lewis Vaden  
Second Vice-President - Arlene McGuire  
Recording Secretary - Ann White  
Corresponding Secretary - Sue Peek  
Treasurer - George W. Moore, Jr.

The following committee chairmen were appointed:

Cemetery - Margaret Burgess  
Historic Site Marking - George Beadles  
Archaeology - Dawn Burns  
Library - Waverly Winfree  
Hospitality - Joan Gleason  
Indexing - Angie Wilderman  
Publications - Mary Ellen Howe  
Museum - Ruby Williams  
Finance - Dick Allen  
Pictures - Hugh Goodwyn

A seal for the Historical Society has been designed by Mary Ellen Howe and Larry M. Goodwyn and drawn by Larry. Mr. Goodwyn is employed by Budget Print Center, Chester, Virginia. The seal incorporates Lord Chesterfield's coat-of-arms within a circle. The Society would like to thank Mr. Goodwyn for his hard work and artistic abilities.



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-the Editor, Mary Ellen Howe

## Chesterfield, Her Home for a Century

*interview by Nancy Schneider  
and  
Beth Landi*

Orie Garnett Markham was born in Chesterfield in June, 1884, and, except for "almost a week" in Richmond, has spent all her life in the county. Until recently, she lived at the Markham homeplace — better known as Lattice Hall — on Genito Road about a mile from Otterdale.

Orie, who never married, made a career of cooking and caring for the many family members who had the good fortune to reside in the big white house on the hill. But, she admitted in a recent interview, there was a time when she entertained thoughts of another profession. At about the age of seventeen, Orie's exceptional sewing skills brought her a job offer from a woman in Richmond. Orie took her up on it, packed a trunk, and headed for the big city. Just a few days later, however, a wagon stopped at her new residence on its way to Chesterfield and, she said, "I just didn't want to see that wagon go home without me on it."

Orie is the last surviving child of Eliza Katherine Flournoy and William Vincent Markham. She had two sisters, Willie Kate and Hyla, and a brother, Eddie. Of her family history, she recalled the most about her mother's side. Her grandfather, Captain Mark F. Flournoy, was married twice, before he married her grandmother, Phoebe. It was thirty-year-old Phoebe's first marriage. The Captain was sixty. They had two children, Orie's mother, and her uncle "Little Willie" who was born after Flournoy's death. Captain Flournoy was buried in a metal coffin, Orie said, which was quite a rarity for the time. She recalled that Phoebe owned the first piano in the neighborhood and contends she played music "sweet enough to charm the birds."



*Orie Markham's first picture  
by Richmond Photo Company*



*Orie Markham at age 99  
Photo by Beth Landi*

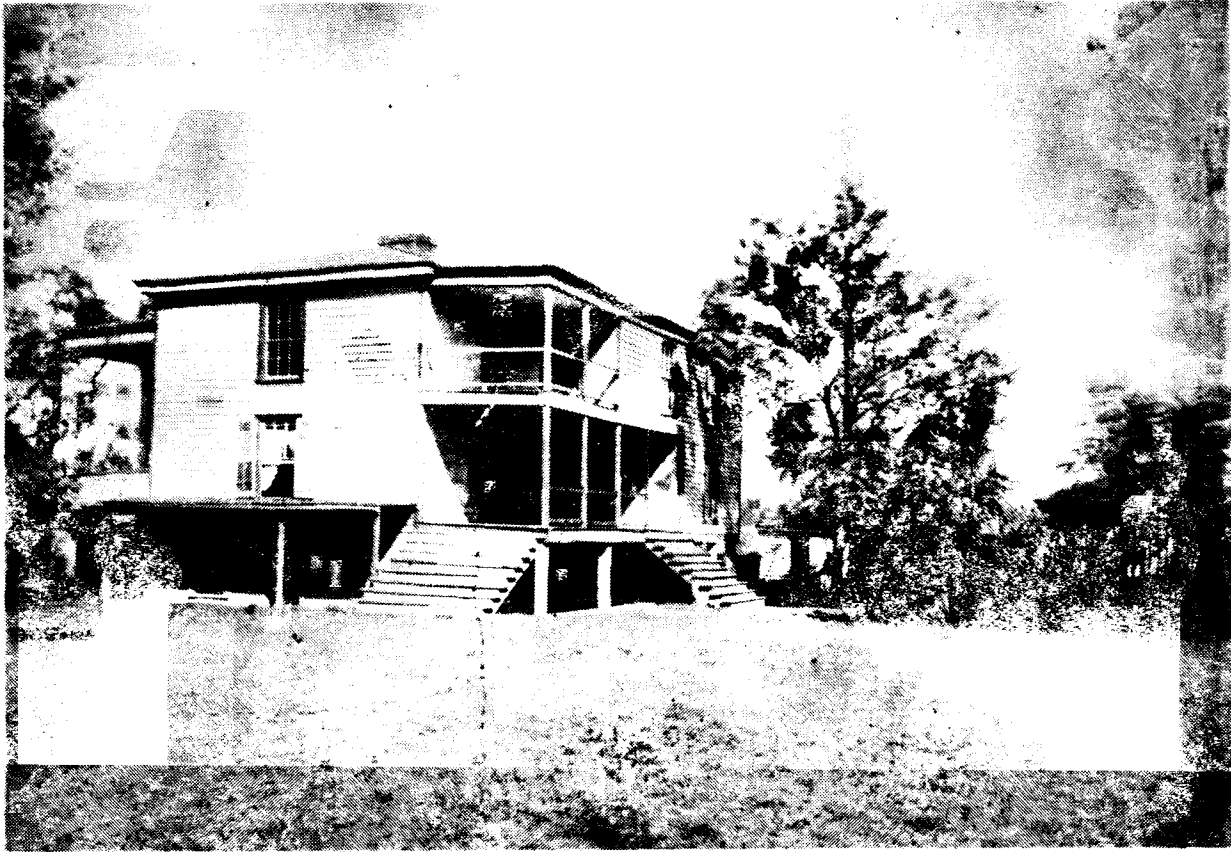
After Flournoy's death, Phoebe married John Lewis Dorsett and moved across Genito Road into Afton. The large home, which burned many years ago, housed a school in its basement. Although Orie did not attend that school, she does recall disrupting classes from time to time with her sisters by peeking in the windows.

John Dorsett had been married previously and had one daughter. He and Phoebe had two children. Phoebe is buried next to her second husband at Mt. Hermon Church. The family cemetery on the Lattice Hall property contains thirteen graves including those of William V. Markham, "Little Willie", Captain Mark Flournoy, and several slaves. No stones remain but each spring, jonquils designate the grave sites.

Orie spends her days of well-deserved leisure with Frances and Levis Crump (whose home is within sight and walking distance of the old homeplace), enjoying favorite television programs, and visits from several generations of her family. Orie's birthdays, as can be expected, have become major events for the household with each one commemorated by a day trip or neighborhood bash.

As for spending her life in Chesterfield, Orie has no regrets although she admits that the burgeoning development in the area has made her feel less like a country girl. "But I like it here," she said. "I just like being home."





*Afon, the home of Dr. John Lewis Dorsett*

## A Special Celebration

The Middle District Baptist Association celebrates its 200th anniversary this year with two special meetings. Sixteen Virginia counties and thirty-four Baptist churches comprised the body of the original Middle District in 1784. The Middle District Baptist Association in 1984 encompasses thirty-six churches located in the counties of Amelia, Powhatan, and Chesterfield.

The 200th Anniversary Semi-Annual Meeting will take place Sunday, April 15 at Chester Baptist Church at 3 p.m.. Dr. William L. Lumpkin, President of the Baptist General Association of Virginia will be the speaker. He is writing the history of the Middle District Baptist Association. After dinner on the grounds, Fred Anderson director of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, will present the Centennial address as he thinks Dr. William E. Hatcher would have given it in 1883 at Mt. Hermon Church. Mrs. Bettie W. Weaver, Chairman of the Middle District Bicentennial Committee, will present the recently completed Middle District quilt. Squares for the colorful

quilt were made by ladies of the various churches and stitched together by ladies of Mt. Hermon and Winfree Memorial Churches.

A Special Religious Liberty Sunday program will be held at Chesterfield Courthouse on June 3, at 2:45 p.m., commemorating the imprisonment of seven Baptist preachers in the Chesterfield jail, 1770-1774. Fred Anderson will portray John Weatherford, imprisoned for five months. A painting by Sidney E. King of John Weatherford in the jail will be presented to the Chesterfield Museum. A historical display will feature: grave rubbings from the tombstones of Weatherford and Eleazar Clay, the restored minute book (1773) of Clay's, artifacts from other churches, and the quilt. A dogwood will be planted near the monument to the Baptist preaches on the Courthouse Square. The public is invited.

-Bettie W. Weaver

## The Wilkinson Tombstone

Researched  
by  
Pattie Grady

The tombstone recently presented to the Chesterfield Historical Society, and to date, the oldest known tombstone in the County, is in all probability that of Joseph Wilkinson. Time and the elements have made some of the letters and numbers difficult to decipher, but comparisons have left the impression that those described below are correct:

Top of stone: Jos Wilkinson  
was born June 16  
1705  
Back of stone: JW Octo 29  
1732

The stone is crudely engraved in a most unusual fashion. The name and date of birth are on the top surface. Initials and a probable death date are on the back portion and sideways in relation to the top of the stone which appears to be a type of gray sandstone often used in the eighteenth century.

Joseph's parents were Joseph Wilkinson and Priscilla Branch Skerme, the widow of Edward Skerme. Their marriage took place in Henrico in 1701. The elder Joseph owned land in the area where this stone was discovered, and it is not unreasonable to assume that he might have owned the land on which it was found. Because of the loss of many early Henrico County deed records, it would be impossible to substantiate this claim. It is known, however, that the elder Joseph lived in that portion of Henrico which became Chesterfield in 1749, and the following deed reveals much:

Wm. Byrd sells Jos Wilkinson Gent of Henrico Co., for L100, 300 acres in Dale parish on s side James River, adj. the river and lands of Thos Knibb, said Jos Wilkinson, Gilbert Ealam and Field Jefferson, known as the Ware Plantation...1st Monday in Dec 1736.

The area known locally and historically as Ware Bottom, Jefferson's Church, or Osbourne's Church site is near the area where this stone was found, and in later Chesterfield deed records, descendants of the elder Joseph Wilkinson sold their land which was described as adjoining the town of Gatesville (Osborne's). Although the above deed is dated later than the tombstone, it is significant that the Ware Plantation land adjoined land already owned by Joseph Wilkinson and placed him in the area with an undetermined amount of land.

The date of birth shown on the stone, June 16, 1705, is compatible with the marriage record of Joseph and Priscilla Branch Skerme Wilkinson. Young Joseph would have been born four years after their marriage. The death date on the stone is substantiated by the will of the younger Joseph. From the wording of the will it is evident that he died as a young man leaving behind a widow (who was possibly expecting a baby) and one infant child. The will reads:

Joseph Wilkinson, Junior of Henrico Co, will dated October 21, 1732, probated September, 1733.; debts and funeral charges to be paid; wife Mary Wilkinson, two negroes and use and benefit of another negro during her

widowhood and in case of remarrying then to my daughter Priscilla Wilkinson. To the child my wife goeth with, if she is with child, the first two children my negro woman Bess may bring, but in case my daughter Priscilla and the child wife goes with die without issue, then said negroes to my brother Edward Wilkinson. To my daughter Priscilla Wilkinson my negro Bess with remainder of her issue. Wife Mary, half of my movable estate and other half to my daughter Priscilla. My troopers arms to my brother Edward Wilkinson. My father Joseph Wilkinson, executor, and guardian of my daughter Priscilla, and my brother Edward Wilkinson, in case of death of my father in Priscilla's minority. Negro boy Chance to my daughter Priscilla when she comes of age of 21 years and in case of her death and that of the child my wife goeth with, to return to my brother Edward Wilkinson.

witnesses: Field Jefferson  
John Osborne  
John Green

Young Joseph preceeded his father in death by almost twenty years. The date of probate was 1733, but it was not uncommon for the probate of a will to be many months after the actual death. The inventory was not presented in court until December, 1733. Joseph's death came very soon after his will was written and would indicate that he was quite ill, knew that death was imminent, and wished to record his desires for his wife and child prior to his hasty demise!



## Archaeology:

The Archeology Committee has plans for a very active year! Steve Perkins has accepted the position of liaison with the County and will be kept informed of all plans for new construction. Through Steve's efforts, we have been given a detailed set of maps by the Planning Department. We will begin marking all significant historic sites in Chesterfield.

Permission was given by First Impressions Developers to conduct a dig in March of historic Ware Bottom Church (the site of the second oldest church in Chesterfield), before the area is bulldozed for a warehouse and office complex in April. We will be instructed by archeologist, Tom Hobbs, who has taught classes with Chesterfield Parks and Recreation. The artifacts will be displayed in the museum for everyone to enjoy.

-Dawn Burns

## Genealogical Corner:

New book available - Richard Bailey, Volume I - by Mary Ellen Howe, price \$25.00 plus \$2.00 postage, description - hard cover , 575 pages, 183 pictures, maps, and illustrations, indexed and footnoted; names included are: Belcher, Gates, Fuqua, Cheatham, Jenkins, Farley, Stockton, Godfrey, Shrewsbury, McComas, Morgan, Mitchem, Lusk, Thompson, Wilson, Cook, Lambert, Walker, Syers, Hurst, Ferguson, Dillon, Harman, Davis, Stafford, King, Calfee, Tuggle, Blankinship, Daniel, Tiller, Davidson, and many others.

New book in progress: Hester Gates Morgan is finalizing a book for publication in 1984 on the line of William Gates and Susannah Epes of Chesterfield, County, Virginia. Her address is 216 South Humbolt, Cenvr, Colorado 80209.

The Bible of William Beverly Gates who lived in the "Yellow House" on Harrowgate Road in Chester, Virginia, has been placed on loan to the Society by William B. Gates Jr., of Colonial Heights, Virginia. Records included in the Bible are as follows:

Obituary of Elizabeth Belcher, wife of Thomas Belcher, died Oct. 31, 1843, and buried at the Seguine Plantation in Chesterfield County, Virginia.

Obituary of Thomas Belcher, died Jan. 2, 1853, and buried at Seguine Plantation.

Thomas Belcher - born Jan. 19, 1793; Elizabeth Belcher - born Feb. 16, 1793.

Ibarray Susan Belcher, - dau. of Thos. and Eliz. - born Nov. 18, 1816.

Daniel Belcher, son of Thos. and Eliz. - born Dec. 8, 1819.

Sarah Frances, dau. of Thos. and Eliz. - b. Sept. 23, 1821.

Elizabeth Middleton Belcher, dau. of Thos. and Eliz. - born Sept. 13, 1827.

William Thos. Belcher, son of Thos. and Eliz. - born Oct. 1831.

Elizabeth Curtis Belcher - born July 16, 1834, died June 1, 1861.

#### Names of Slaves:

\_\_bg - born Mar. 22, 1784

Jen - born Dec. 23, 1806

Amber (?) - born Jan. 29, 1815

Roberson - born July 20, 1817

Octavia - born July 8, 1819

Lucy - Jan. 23, 1822

Leaner (?) - born Nov. 6, 1823

\_\_loming - born April 1806

Jim Loney - born May 1824

D. Mitchel - born Aug. 27, 18\_\_

George Archer - born Oct. 21, 1825

\_\_am don - born Sept. 15, 1827

Aggy Ailler - born Jan. 6, 1828

Trent Randolph - born Mar. 2, \_\_

Henry - born Jan. 1818

Carter Birkly - born Feb. 2, 1830

Peter Miles - born Nov. 12, 1832

James Herberte - born Nov. 12, 1832

Octavy Scot - born Mar. 1833

Patrick - born July 17, 1834

Henryetta Tinchin - born June, 1835 (twin)

Kelley Berry - born June 1835 (twin)

Catherine Stratten - born June 1836

Rachele Jug - born Jan. 28, 1838

Nancy Burkeley - born Feb. 4, 1838

Antinet - born Feb. 1, 1840

Dolley Ann - born April 14, 1840

Abby Loasen (?) - born April 1841

Edmon hicks - born Jan. 4, 1846

Rafe - born Feb. 22, 1845

Frank - born Mar. 184\_\_

Nelson - born Nov. 25, 1846

Tiller Ann Robberson - born Nov. 1848

*Articles printed in the MESSENGER are footnoted as to sources of reference. The footnotes are on file with the Society and will be made available to anyone wishing to use them for research*

*All literary contributions submitted to the MESSENGER and published become the property of the Chesterfield Historical Society of Virginia.*

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