

# The Messenger

OF THE CHESTERFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

Issue Number 59

January 2002

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Chesterfield Historical Society  
Online Web Site

Under Front Mailing Label  
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Memory can glean, but never  
renew. —it brings us joys, faint as  
in the perfume of the flowers,  
faded and dried, of the summer  
that is gone. —H.W. Beecher

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## Bellona, Cast for War

By Dennis P. Farmer

During the War Between the States, some 732 heavy cannon were cast in the South for the Confederate States of America. Of these numbers, by far the most important foundry was that of J.R. Anderson and Company, otherwise known as Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond. Some 431 large guns were cast and provided to defend the new nation. What is less commonly known was the second heavy artillery foundry, Chesterfield County's Bellona Foundry.

As early as 1814 Major John Clarke and William Wirt established their new foundry on 27.5 acres purchase from William and Polly Trabue on the south bank of the James River. With the near by Mid-Lothian coal mines to provide fuel, he built "Gun Road" which became the River Road with its links to Richmond and the Valley of Virginia's many iron works. In addition, the canal system linking the west and the James River allowing access to the Atlantic, and in 1811 the renewed gunpowder industry in Chesterfield County made the was ideal for armory work and cannon founding.

John Clarke had already made a name for himself after serving as the first superintendent of the Virginia State Armory in Richmond in 1802. He had been forced out of office in 1809 and turned towards a private ordnance business effort by 1810. During the War of 1812, he, joined by William Wirt, a well known Richmond lawyer, and future U.S. Attorney General as a partner, produced muskets, rifles, swords and a number of projectiles. Clarke and Wirt ordnance materials were of high quality and unsurpassed by any American weapons makers of the period.

Soon after the War of 1812, new orders of coastal artillery were made by the Federal Government to replace wartime losses and add to the defense f the Republic. An agreement was reached with the U.S. Army to "Prepare works & means for the supply of cannon and shot to the United States." Within a year, orders were placed for 300 tons of cast iron cannon or a total of 600,000 pounds. During these years, cannon were purchased by weight, running from nine cents to twenty cent per pound paid for cannon.

Using his well-established contacts and reputation within the War Department, he was instrumental in obtaining the location of a new Federal arsenal also at the Bellona site. The arsenal was part of the growing network of United States small arms and artillery production and storage. Armoires, of which only two Federal government organizations were built, produced firearms. Arsenals, of which a much larger number both Federal and State complexes existed, stored, repaired and issued weapons and military equipment in times of need, and protected and preserved them when not wanted.

Like the foundry, the arsenal was named after Bellona, the Roman goddess of war. It was constructed about a quarter of a mile from the foundry and made to the plan of a quadrangle, elevated and with a high stone wall for security (but not defense). The main building, along the north side of the complex, was three stories tall, with a projecting pavilion. Upper floor windows were circular and

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**Chesterfield  
Historical Society  
Officers**

President — Doris Hancock

1st Vice-President - Pete Mann

2nd Vice-President - Beverley Coleman

Recording Secretary - Phyllis K. Bass

Corresponding Sec. - Angie Wilderman

Treasurer — G. David Brown

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Bruce Baker, Scott Fisher,  
Paul Shelton,  
Ed Henderson,  
Jack Wilson,  
Arline McGuire,  
Betty Matthews, Wilson Shannon

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Dennis P. Farmer,  
Executive Director

James W. Hollomon,  
Assistant Director  
Jan Suttentfield,  
Administrative Assistant  
Tamara Puster,  
Gift Shop Manager

**Hours  
of  
Operation**

All Museums  
10:00 A.M. — 4:00 P.M.  
Monday - Friday  
1:00 P.M. — 4:00 P.M. on Sunday  
Call (804) 777-9663 for Information

**Editor**  
Mason T. Chalkley

**President's  
Message**

The past few months have been very busy. We were very happy and pleased with the Spirit Walk held for Halloween, the wonderful day we had at the Old Manchester House Tour, our Christmas Open House at Magnolia Grange with festive music, refreshments and decorations for the holidays, and the Museum exhibit "Wheels of Wonder." At Castlewood, Nel and Helen Laughon's silhouettes, our own Mr. and Mrs. Santa Clause, who are a must see next year, and the Christmas luncheon with Margaret Wright's special program "Turn of the Century Toys," all added to the holiday festivities. If you did not attend any of these functions, you missed some wonderful events.

We couldn't accomplish all that we do without our many volunteers. Special thanks to all those who helped make our Old Manchester House Tour a success by serving as hostesses, but especially Monica Rumsey, Rebecca Badger, Lu Henderson and Rachel Lipowicz who served as Site Chairmen. I want to thank Phyllis Bass, Mildred Daffon, Virginia Frymier, Betty Matthews, Marshall Pearman, Scott Beasley, Shirley Hudson, Harold Himes, Casey Woodcock, Ashton Burton and Dawn Lashbrook for their help with the Christmas Open House. Also, thanks to Annie Mann, Susan Poe, Carol Farmer, Ley Diller, Angie Wilderman, Lucille Moseley, Leisse Vanderlinden-Brusse, Gwen Coalter, Kathleen Baker, and Pat Breedan. What a great group of volunteers we have! Thanks also to the staff for the many hours spent making these events so special.

I would like to give a special thanks to Walter McIntyre for allowing us to use his special toys for our "Wheels of Wonder" exhibit and to Mr. and Mrs. Gates of Gates Antiques, for braving a cold and windy day to provide appraisals at our October quarterly meeting. We had some wonderful surprises.

This month we will be having our quarterly meeting at the Defense Supply Center on January 27. Hope to see you there! One of our fund raisers this year will be selling flowers for Valentine's Day. Be sure to order yours early. This is one of many special fund raisers and we hope you will support our efforts. Membership renewal letters have been mailed. We hope to see you all as members during 2002. Ask a friend to join.

Many thanks for your wonderful support during 2001 and I hope you will attend our quarterly meetings and the special events during 2002. Have a safe and healthy new year.

Sincerely,

**Doris Hancock**

**Call For Help!!**

Looking for Chesterfield athletic/recreational objects/momentoes from the past for a major "Locals at Play" exhibit in the County Museum from April through August 2002. Objects may include trophies, gear, uniforms, tickets, programs, etc. Please contact Jim Hollomon at 706-1479 for details.

Bellona, Cast for War, continued

have been described as "gunports", which they are not. On the east and west flanks were two rows of brick workshops and officer's quarters. These are described by Jeffery O'Dell as being three course American bond brick, with ashlar belt courses.

In 1875 a post-Civil War sketch by an unknown artist was posted in lithograph form for a Richmond real estate company. Clearly shown are the high walls reaching as much as seventeen feet tall. Today we are truly lucky that the core of this wonderful site still remains to be seen and used, if not for the production of Bellona's cannon, then for our enjoyment. In a future article, we will explore the post war years of this Chesterfield landmark.

REMEMBER TO USE YOUR UKROP'S VALUED CUSTOMER CARD  
WHEN YOU SHOP FROM JANUARY 28 AND MARCH 30 AND  
WHEN YOU RECEIVE IT, FORWARD YOUR GOLDEN GIFT CERTIFICATE TO  
THE SOCIETY. WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO FUND OUR MANY  
ACTIVITIES. THANKS!

## New Members

We extend a warm welcome to those who joined our membership in 2001:

Albrecht, Joyce  
Anderson, Jeffrey  
Anderson, Mary Ellen  
Benton, Diane H.  
Berger, Louise A.  
Biedler, Susie  
Blanton, Suellen  
Breedon, Patricia D.  
Burch, Richard K.  
Burton, Bruce D.  
Christiansen, Betty J.  
Cloninger, Betty  
Conklin, Tess  
Croctic, Mildred A.  
DuVal, Walter E.

England, Dorothy  
Everet, Lois  
Green, Chris  
Kellett, Paul J.  
Lang, Rebecca S.  
Lefferts, Gloria W.  
Lipowicz, Hana T.  
Lipowicz, Nissa M.  
Lipowicz, Peter J.  
May, Anne A.  
Norton, Raymond B.  
Payne, Jane M.  
Peach, Scott A.  
Robinson, Cynthia  
Rusk, Emily Golightly

Russell-Walston, Kathie  
Slagle, Carolyn  
Stafford, Nancy L.  
Stafford, W. Wayne  
Stevens, William F., Jr.  
Swift, David C.  
Taylor, Frosty  
Walshe, Dorothy L.



## Director's Message

### Winter 2002

It has been a very active fall for the Historical Society this year as we launched into our 21<sup>st</sup> year as an organization for preserving our Chesterfield and American history, our efforts at education and service to our community. The events of September 11 remain with us as part of our daily lives and the impact will be a part of all of us for the rest of our years. However with your support the fall season and our many 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events were a success.

A recap from our September 23<sup>rd</sup> kick off to the Christmas Luncheon had some 1498 people at all of our events. From bus trips to house tours, the Nunnally tree measuring and Sprit walks I would like to thank the 31 volunteers and five staff members who worked so hard to make these events come alive. We are planning the next year events and will post them soon but as you will see in this Messenger, the Eight Annual Lunch Time Lecture Series will start again this February. Thanks to the Circuit Courts we will be able to use the 1917 Courthouse to host them starting on February 6.

Also many of our members would have noticed all the work being done on Magnolia Grange and painting at Castlewood. This year we have had the Jail, Museum and now Castlewood painted. At Castlewood, the sides were chipped and the fragments checked for lead content. The samples are almost completely free, as during the time that Heritage Savings Bank was here, they had removed the old paint from the building. The contractor, Nash and Company did a wonderful job, quick, clean and professional. In addition, Chesterfield County's Department of General Services, repaired damaged wood works, replaced rails and trim works as needed to support the efforts. Many thanks to those folks for a job well done.

In 2002, we will have a condition survey done for Castlewood in the late winter, early spring time frame. Again we have had the good fortune to obtain the talents of Mr. Joseph Dye Lahendro, who has done both the 1996 and 2001 condition surveys for Magnolia Grange. These efforts have been funded via Chesterfield County as part of our terms of agreement for the operations of our four historic buildings. The planned survey will be the most detailed efforts to understand Castlewood to date and I will draft that information into The Messenger as soon as I can.

As mentioned above, Mr. Dye Lahendro has completed a condition survey for Magnolia Grange. In that document, a list of priority recommendations for the Grange are detailed and are the basis for a five year plan to improve both exterior and interior envelopes of the building. On the outside, the removal of perimeter plantings and regrading the slope to the foundation walls was judged to be the very first thing needed.

With the help of Boy Scout Fred Mercado and BSA Troop # 842, and the equipment and skills of Mr. Joe Potts of Greenscapes Co. and Mr. Chris Mueller of Chesterfield Services, Co. and both myself and Bunny Carter of the Society staff, the many perimeter plants were removed in a day.

To quote from the summary of findings, "the most destructive force acting on Magnolia Grange at present is the infiltration of water." Absorption of ground water through the brick foundation walls has had serious repercussions. The failures in exterior brick wall damage to wood structure and destruction of some interior wood finishes were sighted as the most vital need. With the volunteer efforts noted above, some estimated \$8,000 of planned costs was finished in but one well planned day. Department of General Service planted grass seed for our first efforts and we are off on a grand start. Funds for the repairs have been requested of the Board of Supervisors in a Capital Improvement Projections request by both the Society and Department of General Services. In addition, both Jim Hollomon and myself will look for some grant funding in 2002.

Both the roof and the HVAC system will have to be replaced and some 29 other tasks are detailed to do. However, with the oversight of the Historic Sites Committee, the Board of Directors, Society staff, friends of the Grange and Chesterfield County at large, I believe that Magnolia Grange is in good hands for this next step in its illustrious life in our community. From 2002 to 2007 we will be working on these prioritized tasks and if you are interested in the details, please contact me at 777-9663. I have a limited number of the

Winter 2002, continued

detail survey, but anyone who wishes to may come to Castlewood to review our copy.

Come down to the Grange and enjoy this Chesterfield treasure and visit the museum to see its wonderful new exhibit, "Wonders on Wheels", some of the many fine vintage toys loaned to us by Mr. Walter MacIntyre. With a sixty year spread in toys it should be a must see exhibit for every one who delights in wonderful wheels. Special thanks to our curator, Jim Hollomon for job very well done.

Also this summer we plan to do an exhibit of some of the many hundreds of drawings made by Mrs. Vivian Perdue. Her church search for Virginia's historic churches has taken many years and thousands of miles. She will allow us the loan of over 50 of her Chesterfield County churches along with other local South side counties.

If you are a member of a local church with photos, drawings, paintings or other artifacts please contact Jim or myself to include in our summer 2002 exhibit. Also, if you have church histories that can be copied and added to our collection please consider adding them to our fine library for every one to enjoy. If you have contact information, just give us a call at 777-9663 (Dennis) or 796-1479 (Jim) and we will follow up the leads.

Hope to see you soon at the Lunch Time Lectures and wishing all of our Society my very best for a merry and wonderful New Year.



Magnolia Grange ca. 1916-1918

Notice the wooden picket rails around the ground floor. A number were unearthed in removing the boxwoods. From left to right: Mrs. Walter N. Perdue, Julia Perdue, Mildred Perdue Daffron, and friend, Mr. W. Tilghman Cogbill

## Featured Society Volunteer

Our grateful thanks to Society volunteer Ley Diller, who gave hundreds of hours to both the library and genealogy committees, as well as special events for our Society in 2001. Ley, who is active with a number of other organizations, gives freely of her time and skills to the many requests we receive yearly. Often we get thank you calls or letters from the folks that she has aided. Also, you can often find Ley actively supporting our efforts to recruit new members, retain older ones and generally provide outstanding personal service and a friendly face for history in Chesterfield County. Thank you Ley!

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

## New Artifacts

Just at the end of the year, Mr. James H. Willcox, Jr. of Hopewell made a wonderful offer of two Skinquater artifacts from the Sims place. With the good offices and refreshments of Mary Ellen Howe, I spent an enjoyable morning with Jim and Mary Ellen in Hopewell while loading the large chest of drawers into my van for transport to the Society. Mary Ellen also convinced Jim to donate a mid-18<sup>th</sup> century mirror also from the Sims place. These pieces of furniture were owned by Miss Willie Augusta Sims (1917-2000) and have been in the family for three generations. We will display the drawers at Magnolia Grange while the mirror will be used at Castlewood.

For any one interested in more information related to the Sims family, try: *Hickman's Half-Acre: An Illustrated History of Skinquater Baptist Church 1778-1978* by George Andrews Beadles, Jr. and Harriette M. Horner, The Dietz Press, Inc. 1978.

## Museum Shop

**Come by the Museum Shop  
before or after the  
Lunchtime Lecture Series  
for a 25% discount  
on lecture day.  
Be sure to take a peek  
at our new museum  
ornament!**

## Important Notice

In order to publish *The Messenger* in a timely fashion, we wish to remind you that guidelines have been established for submissions, as follows:

December 1 for January issue

March 5 for April issue

June 5 for July issue

September 5 for October issue

Editor Mason Chalkley's schedule is very full and if he is to continue his volunteer commitment to *The Messenger*, it is important that this schedule be kept. He asks that all articles submitted be copied to a floppy disk in Word 6, Windows 95, with hard copy attached for editing purposes. Thank You.

## COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHT

The Historic Sites Committee, in conjunction with the Assistant Director, maintains, preserves and physically enhances the historic sites and the County Museum in Chesterfield County that are specifically designated the responsibility of the Chesterfield Historical Society.

The specific duties of the committee are:

- To collect, preserve, maintain and exhibit a variety of historical artifacts which relate to the historical and cultural development of Chesterfield County;
- To seek and solicit suitable historic artifacts for the collections, making recommendations to the Historical Society Board for acquisition or deaccession of said objects;
- To actively promote the educational aspects of the sites and exhibits, providing input for the interpretation and programming of the Museum and sites;
- To promote lectures, programs, events and tours for the benefit of the Historical Society and Chesterfield residents, to enhance the awareness of our historical importance to the region, state and nation;
- To ensure the staffing of all sites and the Museum with volunteers;
- To participate in the long range planning process, helping ensure orderly growth/change for sites in the future;
- To monitor conditions of all facilities which are the responsibility of the Historical Society, making recommendations for appropriate usage, maintenance, renovations projects pursuant to county, state, federal and professional guidelines;
- To inform the Director and Board of the Historical Society of actions taken relating to the above procedures.



These five images by Ron Stern of Stern Studios are the latest offering of the Museum Gift Shop. Produced by a local Chesterfield artist these are \$25.00 each unframed or all five for \$100.00. Note card sets of any one or a combination of all five for \$ 12.95. Also...all Christmas stock at 50% off. Drop in and pick up your favorites from Magnolia Grange to the 1892 Jail!

## Chesterfield Historical Society

### Lunchtime Lecture Series 2002

The Chesterfield Historical Society of Virginia will offer its eighth year of Lunchtime lectures by noted museum and educational professionals. All lectures will be held in the historic 1917 Courthouse, thanks to the courtesy of the Chesterfield Circuit Court. Participants are invited to bring a brown bag lunch to enjoy during the lecture. Admission per person is \$5.00 for the general public and \$3.00 for Society members. For more information please call (804) 777-9663.

Wednesday, February 6, 2002 "Robert E. Lee: The Man and his Family, a Slide Presentation" presented by Mr. Eric App, Museum of the Confederacy

Mr. App will present a look into General Robert E. Lee and his family using slides of Lee artifacts from the Museum of the Confederacy collections.

Wednesday, February 13, 2002 "Country of the Apamatica, Native Americans in Chesterfield County" By Mr. Dennis Farmer, Chesterfield Historical Society

A presentation on the important role played by Chesterfield County's "first nations", the Powhatan and Monacan people. Please come and enjoy this program which will display some replica artifacts related to Indian life in Chesterfield.

Wednesday, February 20, 2002 "The Robiou Murder Trials 1851: Chesterfield's Infamous Murders" presented by Dennis Farmer, Chesterfield Historical Society.

In 1851 Chesterfield and Virginia were shaken by the murder of 47 year old Anthony Robiou, shot to death by his father in law, but events took many a horrible turn including a second murder, the death of the infant of Mrs. Robiou. Based on over 2000 pages of transcripts researched by Bettie Woodson Weaver, this program will display a copy of the murder weapon and bullets as well as other displays.

Wednesday, February 27, 2002 "Ettrick Historical Society" a special program presented by Mrs. Mary Ellen Anderson, Ettrick Historical Society that will talk about Chesterfield County's newest Historical Society, in one of our oldest communities.

Wednesday, March 6, 2002 "Uncommon Soldiers" presented by Mrs. Joyce Henry, Petersburg National Park. Hundreds of thousands serviced in both armies during the War Between the States. This presentation will look into the role of those most 'uncommon soldiers'.

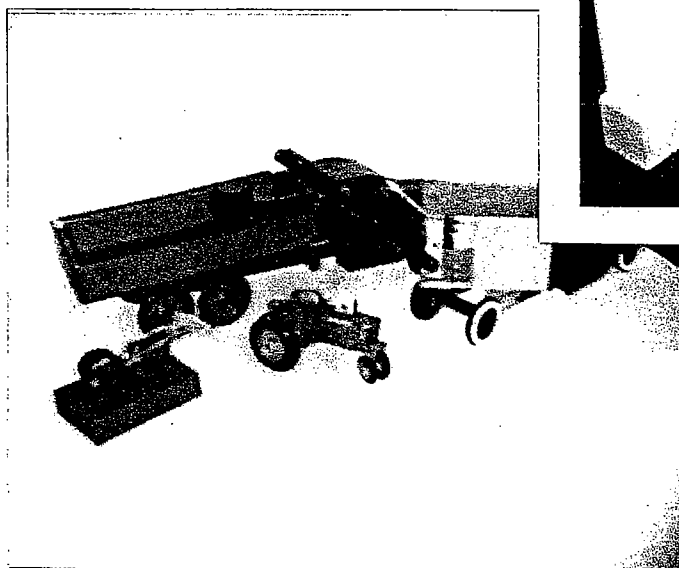
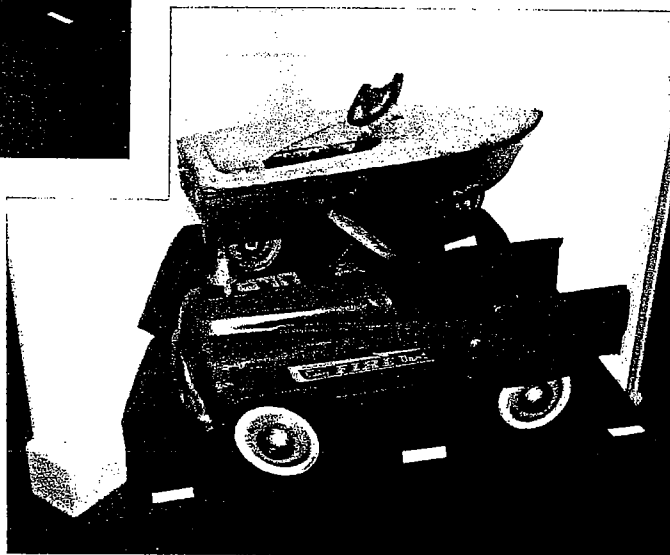
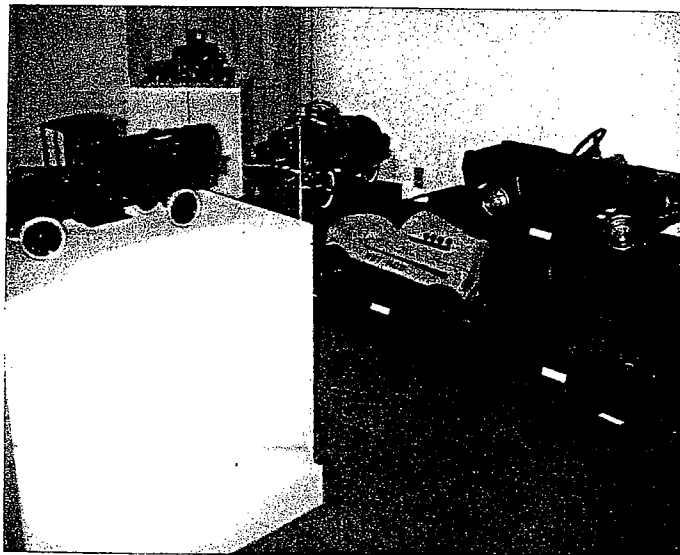
Wednesday, March 13, 2002 "Lee's Retreat: The End of America's Longest Siege" presented by Mr. Jimmy Blankenship, Petersburg National Park. A closer look into the nine and a half month long siege at Petersburg and its effects on Chesterfield and the fortunes of both Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and Grant's Armies.





## "Wheels of Wonder"

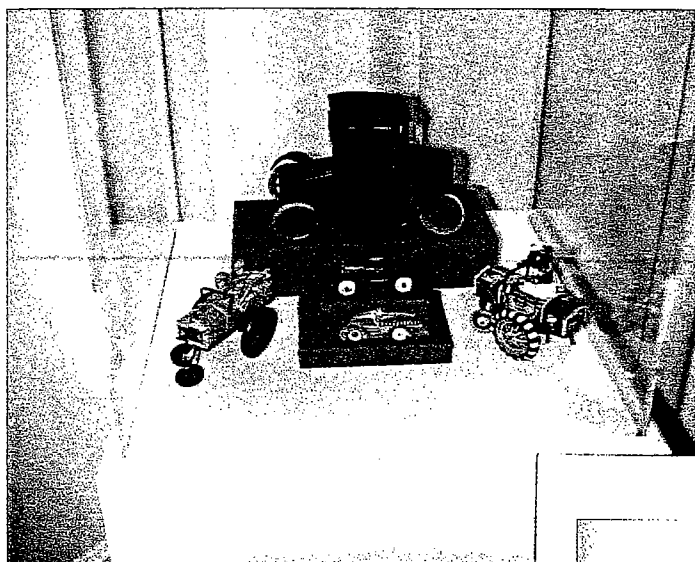
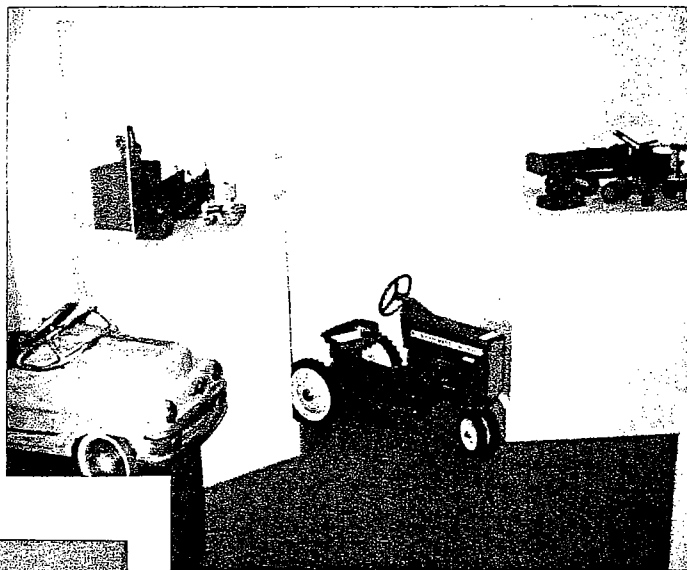
For those of you who have not been able to visit our new exhibit, "Wheels of Wonder", we thought we would give you a just a peek at what you are missing. These vintage toys, spanning some sixty years in our history, will delight you beyond measure as you travel back in time to your own yesteryear. Let the memories flood your mind and heart and renew once again that spirit of your youth. Enjoy!



Picture yourself  
enjoying one of these  
toys and become  
a child again -  
*Feels Oh So Good!*

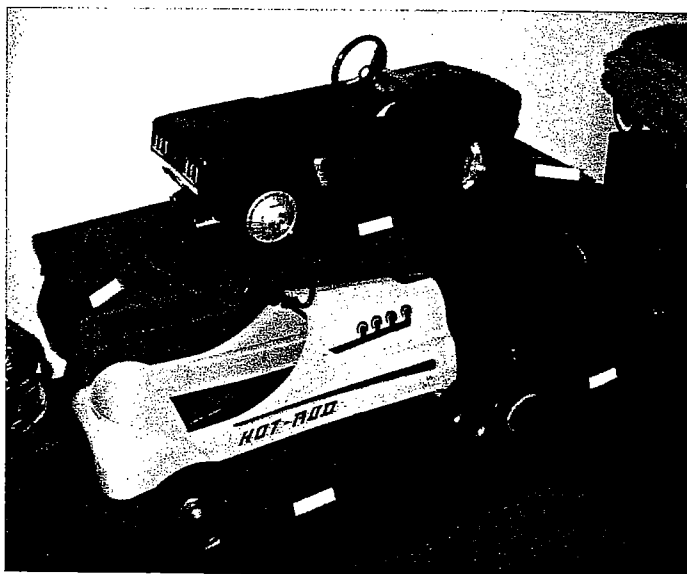
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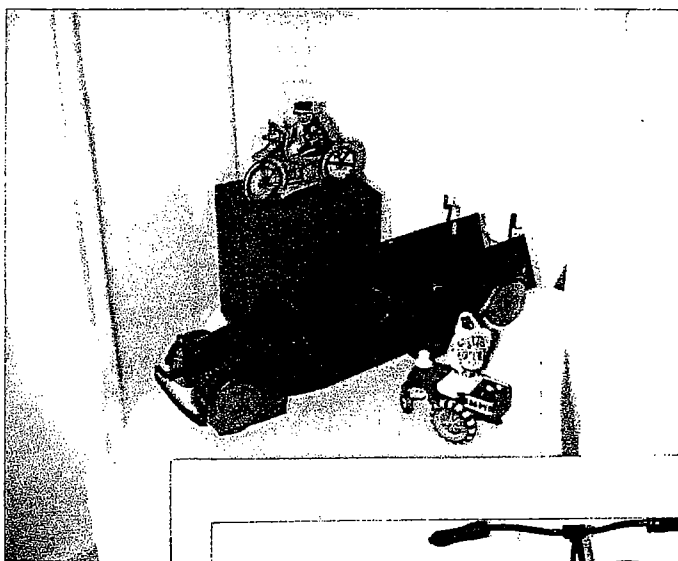
Aren't these great?



Do these remind you  
of your youth?

You have just got to come  
and see these great  
toys in this  
exhibit - - -



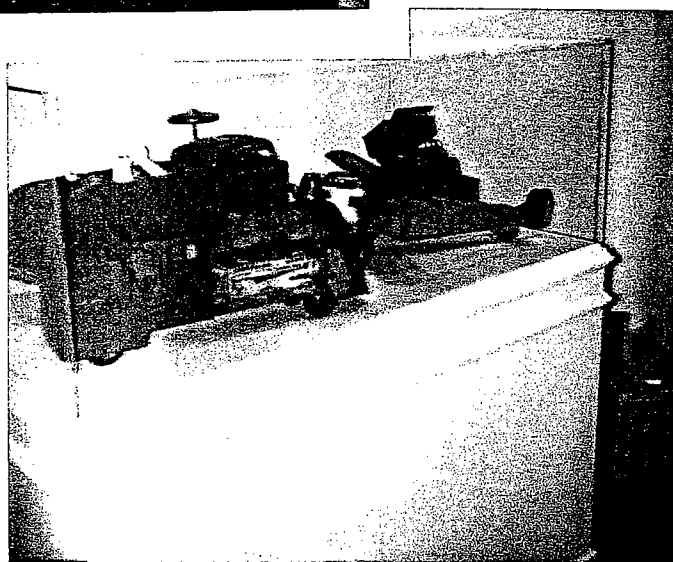


Did you play  
with a  
similiar  
toy  
in your  
youth?



The memories of our  
youth will ever  
be with us no matter  
what the future holds  
for the future is but  
the past being played  
again through our  
children!

—The Editor



**The Chesterfield Historical Society of Virginia is proud  
to announce the release by pre-sale only of**

**Jeffrey M. O'Dell's**

**Chesterfield County  
Early Architecture and Historic Sites  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2002**

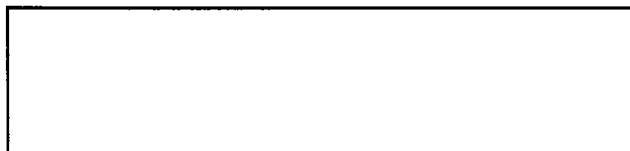
**Over 518 pages with hundreds of photographs, drawings and site plans of the villages,  
houses, churches, schools, taverns, hotels, cemeteries, stores, government buildings,  
military sites and structures with interviews, historical notes and much, much more. This  
is a faithful reprinting of the 1983 edition (ISBN No. 0-9610774-0-9 and LCC 80-83711)**

**Cost: \$ 52.00 with personal pick up of book on notification at Castlewood, 10201  
Iron Bridge Road or an additional \$ 6.00 shipping and handling (\$ 58.00 total)**

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