

# The Pittsylvania Packet

Fall 2002

Number 46



**Pittsylvania Historical Society  
Chatham, Virginia**

# Our Administration

President:	J. Fuller Motley
Vice President:	Frances Hurt
Treasurer:	George Harper
Recording Secretary:	Susan Worley
Membership Secretary:	Anne Richards
Editor of <i>The Pittsylvania Packet</i> :	Sarah E. Mitchell
Directors:	Catherine Overbey
	Norman Amos
	Virginia Chapin
	Alice Overbey
	Mack Doss
	Glenn Giles
	Langhorne Jones, Jr.
	Elise Allen
	Mollie Holmes

\* \* \* \* \*

Please send articles, letters, queries, etc. for publication to:

Sarah E. Mitchell, editor  
Pittsylvania Historical Society  
P. O. Box 1148  
Chatham, VA 24531  
Telephone 434-432-0595  
E-mail [sarahmitchell@vintagedesigns.com](mailto:sarahmitchell@vintagedesigns.com)

Of particular interest at this time are letters to and from Pittsylvania County soldiers in the Civil War, World War I, World War II, etc.; and articles about and interviews with Pittsylvania County soldiers.

# *The Pittsylvania Packet*

*Fall 2002*

*Number 46*

**President's Report** by *J. Fuller Motley*.....3

## **Upcoming Events**

October 21 Fall Meeting Features  
Clerk's Office Museum Plans.....4

Fall: Reynolds Homestead Exhibits  
Jesse Andrews' Photodocumentary.....6

November 9 Bus Tour Focuses on Mid-1800's,  
Southeastern Pittsylvania.....6

December 6-7 Christmas in Historic  
Chatham.....7

## **News**

Train Station Grant Received.....5

Herman Melton's New Book Tells of  
Crime and Punishment in County.....7

Sarah Mitchell Appointed *Packet* Editor.....7

Society Acquires Valuable Publications.....12

Log Tobacco Curing Barn Reconstructed.....13

Tobacco Barn Replica Available.....14

New Membership Rates,  
Drive Announced.....17

## **Articles**

Pittsylvania County Jails  
by *Langhorne Jones, Sr.* .....8

A Chatham History Quiz  
by *Henry Mitchell*.....10

Pittsylvania and the Beginnings of Bright  
Leaf by *Maud Carter Clement*.....15

## **Departments**

Genealogical Query.....17

Publications, Etc. for Sale.....18

# President's Report

*by J. Fuller Motley*

Although the summer was hot and dry, the Society had a productive season. We had good attendance at the July 10 annual picnic. People enjoyed the food and music, but the highlight of the occasion was the announcement by Roy Byrd that some money had been approved for the restoration of the train station.

A lease has been secured from the town of Chatham on the 1813 Clerk's Office property.

The tobacco barn has been completed and dedicated. Money for the barn has come from Dimon tobacco company, concerned citizens, and private contributions. Virgil Goode, Representative from the 5<sup>th</sup> district, was guest speaker at the dedication service on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002.

At our August board meeting, we were honored to have Col. Clyde East, USAF, Retired (subject of Herman Melton's article in the Spring 2002 *Packet*) as our guest. He now works at the Ronald Reagan Library in California, and has promised to send us a video featuring his life as a pilot.

We are looking forward to another successful festival at Callands and to other positive projects.

Thanks for your support!

\* \* \* \* \*

Memberships, publications, and replica tobacco barns make wonderful holiday presents. Consider them for the history buffs on your gift list!

# Fall Meeting Features Clerk's Office Museum Plans

*by Langhorne Jones, Jr., Chairman  
Museum Committee*

The Pittsylvania Historical Society's Fall Meeting will be held at **7:30 p.m. on Monday, October 21, 2002**, in the 1813 Clerk's Office in Chatham. (The 1813 Clerk's Office is located behind Chatham Town Hall on Court Street in Chatham.)

The Museum Committee will present the program, "**The Future of the Society's Museum.**" We will present new plans for the arrangement of the display of the artifacts as an effort to make them more information friendly to all visitors. Also included in the program will be a presentation of the "**Best Kept Secrets**" of the museum. This program will point out artifacts most members may never have noticed, although all are in plain view.

We promise you an informative, exciting, and interesting meeting. Come out and be part of your history!

\* \* \* \*

The Museum Committee reports the installation of central heat and air conditioning in the 1813 Clerk's Office. With this wonderful acquisition the environment in the museum will be more artifact friendly. In the process of installing the heat/air conditioning we discovered, stored in the attic, a sizeable number of cedar shakes, some walnut lumber, other boards of pine and poplar and enough molding to replace the deteriorating baseboard molding in the original part of the Clerk's Office. (These finds were leftovers from the restoration of the Clerk's Office in 1984.)

While we are speaking of the 1813 Clerk's Office, the Museum Committee would like to acquire a picture of the clerk's office before restorations began. We have many pictures after completion but none taken before.

## **Train Station Grant Received**

*by Susan Worley*

Roy Byrd Jr. of Chatham, former member of the Virginia Department of Transportation Board, presented a letter at the Summer Meeting, announcing a \$259,000 federal enhancement grant to renovate the Chatham Train Station. The monies were awarded following a special request submitted by Byrd.

"I have been interested in the train station for 10 years," said Byrd. "I knew the money was there and I wanted the train station to benefit." The letter, from Robert Cassady of the Virginia Department of Transportation, said the department was assigning a portion of unallotted enhancement funds to the project.

The money will provide funding to proceed with the Chatham Depot Restoration project. Train Station Restoration Taskforce co-chairmen Glenn Giles was pleased, saying, "This will help put the roof on the building and stop the deterioration and accomplish some of the needed exterior repairs."

When restored, the train station will serve as the Pittsylvania Veterans History Museum. Collecting veterans records for the museum has already started.

## **Reynolds Homestead Exhibits Jesse Andrews' Photodocumentary**

Pittsylvania County native Jesse Andrews' photographic exhibit, *Thirteen-Month Crop*, will be on display at Reynolds Homestead in Critz, Virginia. The exhibit depicts a year in the life of a Pittsylvania County tobacco farmer. The photographs will be on display from September 3 until October 30, 2002.

Reynolds Homestead is open Tuesdays-Saturdays, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. and on Sunday, 1:00-4:00 p.m. Admission fee is \$2 for adults, \$1 for children and senior citizens. For more information contact Reynolds Homestead at 276-694-7181 or see their website at [www.cis.vt.edu/reynolds\\_homestead](http://www.cis.vt.edu/reynolds_homestead).

## **November Bus Tour Focuses on Mid-1800's, Southeastern Pittsylvania**

A bus tour of Pittsylvania County historical sites is planned for November 9, 2002. The tour will focus on industrial, religious, and home sites of the mid-1800's.

Among the sites considered are the ruins of Henry's Mill, the Birch Creek Works, Great Oaks, ruins of Reaves Mill, ruins of Sutherlin Mill, and Flippin Store at Keeling. (Plans are still being finalized.)

The bus will leave from the Chatham Welcome Center on Main Street (near Chatham Cleaners) at 10 A.M. The cost will be \$15.00 for Pittsylvania Historical Society members. A box lunch will be included in the ticket cost.

For tickets, contact Buddy Overbey at 434-432-6000 (work) or at 434-432-8007 (home).

## **“Christmas in Historic Chatham” Planned for December 6-7**

The annual “Christmas in Historic Chatham” celebration is scheduled for the evening of Friday, December 6, and on Saturday, December 7. House tours, a lamp-lighting ceremony, and many other events are planned.

## **Herman Melton’s New Book Tells of Crime and Punishment in County**

Local historian Herman Melton announces the release of his new book, *Thirty-Nine Lashes — Well Laid On: Crime and Punishment in Southside Virginia 1750 - 1950*. The book is 400 pages, hardcover, and is illustrated, footnoted, and indexed.

Copies will be available from the author at his home after December 2<sup>nd</sup>. A book signing is planned at Chatham Books, Main St., Chatham, on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002 as part of the “Christmas in Historic Chatham” celebration.

## **Sarah Mitchell Appointed *Packet* Editor**

The Board of Directors announces with regret that Lindy Conner has resigned from her position as editor of the Pittsylvania Packet due to family and career obligations. We wish Lindy the best of luck with her future endeavors.

Sarah E. Mitchell is appointed new editor of the magazine. Sarah, a Pittsylvania County native and former assistant secretary of the Society, does historical and genealogy research, as well as editing and graphic design projects.



## **Pittsylvania County Jails**

*From research notes by Langhorne Jones, Sr.  
Submitted by Langhorne Jones, Jr.*

The new County Jail, which was dedicated on Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup> 1981, is the eleventh jail in Pittsylvania County and is the ninth jail to be built in Chatham. It cost approximately two million dollars to build, compared to the \$33,000 total cost, including all additions, of the one it replaced.

### *First Three Jails at Callands 1768 - 1777:*

The first three jails in Pittsylvania County were at Callands, then the County seat and named Chatham by the General Assembly in 1768 when 50 acres were divided into lots around the Courthouse. The name was never used but it was called Callands after a popular merchant, Samuel Calland, who operated a store in the old brick building, which still stands.

The first jail at Callands was built by James Roberts in 1768. It was located near where the present restored old clerk's office stands. The second jail, which actually consisted of two jails, one for prisoners and one for debtors, was built in 1771. One of these jails was 12 by 14 feet and the other was 10 by 10 feet. They were built by Michael Rowland for which he was paid 11,700 pounds of tobacco. In 1773 the third jail was built by Bryon Ward Nowlan and was 12 by 14 feet in size. He was paid 4000 pounds of tobacco for the construction of this jail.

### *Nine Jails built in Chatham 1778 - 2002:*

When Henry County was cut off from Pittsylvania County in 1777, the County seat was moved from Callands to what is now Chatham, but then known as Pittsylvania Court

House. This name was changed by the General Assembly in 1852 to Chatham, the name it still has.

The first jail in the new County seat was built in 1778 along with a courthouse and, according to a map made by Joshua Stone in 1879, was on an eight acre tract of land located near a spring at the end of Kemper Street in the western part of Chatham.

The second jail was constructed in 1785 according to a plan drawn by Payne, Parker and White and was located in the area now occupied by Chatham Town Hall. This jail was erected because the first jail had been destroyed by fire.

The third jail was constructed in 1801 near the location of the second jail. It was built by James Welch and was 20 feet by 16 feet in size.

The fourth jail was constructed in 1810 in the same location and was partly made of stone.

The fifth jail was built in 1817 in the same location and was constructed by John Wingfields at a cost of \$2000. It was 22 feet by 14 feet in size. A room was added in 1824.

The sixth jail was constructed in 1827 near the other one and was also 22 feet by 14 feet enclosed by a stone wall. This jail was apparently constructed of stone or rock and remained in use until 1844 when it was destroyed by fire.

The seventh jail was constructed in 1844 and was built on a new location, "on East side of Main Street of Competition," which is about where the present Confederate Monument stands. It was made of brick and a kitchen was built on the outside. This jail faced the Main Street and remained in use until it burned in 1884. The county had \$1500 insurance on the building.

Dedrick & Plesants of Danville constructed the eighth jail, located on the north side of the Courthouse, in 1884 at a cost of \$19586. It was enlarged in 1911 under plans made by J. O. McGruder at a cost of \$6739. In 1913 the jail was enlarged, new cells built and central heating installed. Two rooms above the jail were made suitable for prisoners, all at a cost of \$12917. This jail is the one removed to make a place for the jail dedicated in 1981.

All the jails in the County except three were of frame construction, and there were three jails destroyed by fire. The present jail is a palace compared to all the others.

## **A Chatham History Quiz**

*by Henry H. Mitchell*

In 2002, is Chatham, Virginia:

262 years old?

225 years old?

195 years old?

150 years old?

128 years old?

All of the above?

The answer is, of course, “all of the above!” Chatham is 262, 225, 195, 150, AND 128 years old!

It was established as the courthouse village when the courthouse was moved here in 1777, at the time the former western regions of the county were cut off and the present boundaries of the county were made official. So, in that sense “Pittsylvania Courthouse” (now called Chatham) is 225 years old.

In 1807 an eight-acre town called “Competition” was incorporated by the state legislature under a self-perpetuating trustee form of government. So Chatham as an incorporated town is 195 years old.

In 1852 the state legislature changed the name of the town from Competition to Chatham. So Chatham has been called Chatham for 150 years, and that is the sesquicentennial event being celebrated this year.

In 1874 the town became governed by an elected body. So Chatham has had an elected government for 128 years.

And so forth ..... . (The previous was derived from notes made by the late Judge Langhorne Jones.)

One further item: the settlement of the Cherrystone springs vicinity (now Chatham) occurred around 1740. At least one Chatham family, the Watsons, has occupied Chatham land since that date, in their case now the eighth generation.

In that sense, Chatham has been a settlement for 262 years!

So Chatham is a Southern belle who can count her candles as she deems most appropriate at the moment — 262, 225, 195, 150, 128 — and a name change 150 years ago seems like a very good reason to celebrate in 2002!

*This article was first published online at [www.victorianvilla.com/sims-mitchell/local/quiz/](http://www.victorianvilla.com/sims-mitchell/local/quiz/)*

Editor’s Note: Preston Moses (former editor of the *Star-Tribune* and Historical Society President) recorded in the Oct. 6, 1977 *Star-Tribune* that Chatham was observing its 200<sup>th</sup> birthday.

# **A Hundred Years of History:**

## **Society Acquires Valuable Publications**

The Pittsylvania Historical Society is pleased to announce the receipt of an important gift. Langhorne Jones, Jr., Chairman of the Museum Committee, is excited about the receiving a complete set of the issues of the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* from its beginnings in 1892 to 1997. Literally hundreds of issues are included and approximately half are in cloth bound hardcover that is in relatively good condition. In addition, there were two other valuable collections that provide excellent historical and genealogical resource material. One collection consists of twenty-seven years of the *William and Mary Quarterlies* dating from 1892 (Vol. 1) through 1919 (Vol. 27). Finally, there are ten years of *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazines* dating from 1919 through 1929. Each of these collections contains many family histories of prominent Virginians and this makes them valuable genealogical tools.

The gift came about when Diane Adkins, Director of the Pittsylvania County Library system, was notified that the branches of the Blue Ridge Regional Library System had duplicate copies of some collections and were willing to give duplicates to libraries and other deserving organizations. The alert Mrs. Adkins thought of the Historical Society; notified the Museum Committee; and had them shipped to the Chatham library where they were received by Langhorne Jones Jr.

The collection was shelved by Herman Melton in the east wing of the 1813 Clerk's Office Museum. Historical Society members are invited to examine it by making an appointment to do so with Herman Melton.

## **Tobacco Curing Barn Reconstructed**

*By Frances Hallam Hurt*

A major player in Pittsylvania County's past has just taken up residence in the Frances Hallam Hurt Park in Chatham, that is, a working log tobacco barn.

It is the gift of Amy and Dave Davis who now own the property on which the barn was built around the year 1900 by Luther Blair. He was helped by his cousins and brothers-in-law, Nathan and Jimmy Shelton. All three men were Confederate veterans. They were the great uncles of J. Fuller Motley, who supplied this information.

Amy and Dave Davis now live in the Luther Blair home which they have restored. Located on Mill Creek Road (Rt. 691), the farm is approximately one mile west of Mill Creek Church.

Moving the barn into the park was a major undertaking by Fuller Motley. Not only did he move it, he mixed the mud to chink the logs and chinked them himself. He confided that his hands got so tired, he started mixing the mud with his feet.

Rock for the walls and fire boxes came from several places including the Ramsey farm at Chalk Level and the house chimney on Doran Barker's farm. Flues, slide and stringing horse came from a barn on the farm of John B. and William T. Pruitt of the Weal community, donated by their descendant, Mittie Lou Edmonds. The door on the north side with strap hinges came from Dave Pannell's horse barn at

Chalk Level. When Jeb Stuart of Confederate fame visited his grandmother at Chalk Level, his horse was stalled behind this door. The rock foundation at the new location was laid by Mike Creasey and his assistant.

\* \* \* \*

The restored tobacco barn was dedicated on Sept. 6, 2002. Special guest speakers were Congressman Virgil H. Goode, Sen. Charles R. Hawkins, and Del. Robert Hurt.

The cost of the project was funded by the Pittsylvania Historical Society with donations from DIMON, Universal Leaf (parent company of Danville's Southern Processing), and private individuals. A history of the barn was compiled by J. Fuller Motley with the help of Chatham town clerk Catherine Miller.

## **Tobacco Barn Replica Available**

In conjunction with Pittsylvania Historical Society's acquisition of the restored tobacco barn, a hand-made, detailed replica of the barn has been crafted by Delano S. Cocke, an artisan with Pittsylvania County roots.

The replica is accurate in every detail down to the fireboxes, flues, and hand-hewn logs. The size is 7 ½ inches wide, 10 ½ inches deep, and 7 ½ inches to the rooftop. Each replica barn will be individually crafted upon receipt of order and will be signed and numbered by Cocke. (A sample may be seen in the window of Boppa's restaurant, Main Street, Chatham.)

Replica barns are available through the Pittsylvania Historical Society for payments of two installments of \$70 each (\$140 total). A down-payment of the first \$70 installment is placed at the time of order with the final \$70 payment due at delivery. Orders may be given to Langhorne Jones, Jr. at (434) 432-9261 or at Chatham Books on Main Street in Chatham. Allow four to six weeks for delivery. Replica barns will only be available until Dec. 31, 2002.

## **Pittsylvania and the Beginnings of Bright Leaf**

*by Maud Carter Clement (1879-1969)*

The farmers of Piedmont Virginia began experimenting as early as 1800 with the curing of tobacco by fire instead of air, in order to dry the plant more rapidly. Charcoal fires were used in an effort to do away with the smoke which gave to the leaf a bitter taste. A crude type of flue was tried out by planters in different counties. In 1828 Dr. David Tuck of Halifax County invented a very successful method. He built rock flues such as are used today, opening into sheet iron pipes which extended around both halves of the barn, and emptied into a chimney. It was found that flue curing improved the flavor and brightened the color of the leaf.

In 1829, Mr. Nat Robinson, whose plantation was on White Oak Mountain, sold bright yellow tobacco in Danville, having developed his own system of curing. From this time on White Oak tobacco stood in a class to itself.



In 1903 the *Tobacconist Record* stated, "White Oak tobacco is still far famed." The gentle rise which is called White Oak Mountain extends diagonally across southern Pittsylvania. It has a light grey soil peculiarly suited to tobacco culture.

In 1839, a man named Slade in Caswell County, North Carolina, accidentally cured a barn of yellow tobacco by suddenly applying charcoal heat. This was greatly advertised. But the art of curing tobacco by heat to a bright yellow color and sweet flavor was developed through years of experiment in Virginia.

It is claimed that the production of a bright yellow tobacco was one of the most stupendous developments in agriculture that the world has ever known (according to an edition of the United States census). And from the meager record, it would seem that it was first produced in Pittsylvania. The delicate texture of the leaf, its golden color, fragrance, and sweet flavor won instant approval and created a heavy demand both at home and abroad. Danville became the market for the leaf, and soon assumed a leading place in the tobacco world. This bright sweet tobacco became known as Virginia Leaf, whether it was grown in Pittsylvania or in far off China.

In 1840, Pittsylvania ranked first among Virginia counties in the production of tobacco, growing 6,439,000 pounds.

*From "An Abbreviated History of Pittsylvania County," Chapter 7: "Agriculture, Trade, and Industry," written by Maud Carter Clement ca. 1952 for the Pittsylvania County Public Schools.*

## Queries

I am seeking information on William Thurman (born circa 1763 in Virginia), son of Richard Thurman who died in Pittsylvania County in 1806. He was apparently married two or three times. William and his wife, Susannah \_\_\_\_\_, moved to Cumberland County, Kentucky. What was the name of his daughter who married Isaac Ashlock? Please reply to Tyson Ashlock, 609 Encino Pl. NE #503, Albuquerque, NM 87102-2615.

### **New Membership Rates, New Members Drive Announced**

Presently, the Pittsylvania Historical Society has more active projects than it has had since its formation 26 years ago. Our needs for financial and manpower resources have never been more urgent. We are initiating our 2003 Membership Campaign in October and asking all current members to renew their membership. We are also seeking new members and requesting that past members rejoin the Society. The Society continues to experience rising costs in many areas such as postage and printing costs; therefore, it is necessary to increase membership dues. We have had the same dues structure for 26 years. Annual individual memberships will cost \$15 and family memberships are \$25. We have also established \$50 Supporter and \$100 Patron memberships. We will plan special activities for this class of membership throughout the year. Please respond when you receive your 2003 Membership Campaign mailing.

## Books, Etc. For Sale

To order, send check or money order to: Susan Worley, 380 Greenbay Road, Chatham, Virginia 24531. All prices include postage.

Maud Carter Clement, *History of Pittsylvania County, Virginia*, reprinted in hardcover. \$24.00.

Maud Carter Clement, *War Recollections of the Confederate Veterans of Pittsylvania County, Virginia 1861 - 1865*, softcover. \$12.00.

Roger Dodson, *Footprints From the Old Survey Books*, softcover. \$12.00.

Madelene Fitzgerald, *Pittsylvania Homes and History of the Past*, hardcover. \$20.00.

Madelene Fitzgerald and Frances Hurt, *Eighteenth Century Landmarks of Pittsylvania County, Virginia*, softcover. \$12.00.

Frances Hurt, *An Intimate History of the American Revolution in Pittsylvania County*. Illustrated and fully indexed, hardcover. \$17.00.

Kenyon McCann, *Ride Into Darkness*, Pittsylvania County's first historical novel based on actual 1840 mass murder. Softcover. 217 pages. \$12.50.

Kenyon McCann, *A Cruel Wind Blowing*, Author's sequel to *Ride into Darkness*. Historical novel set in Pittsylvania County. Softcover. \$13.50.

Herman Melton, editor, *Old Fast & Perfect: Sketches from the 54 Year Life of the Franklin & Pittsylvania Railroad 1878 - 1932*. 28 pages, softcover. \$3.75.

Herman Melton, *Pittsylvania County's Historic Courthouse: The Story Behind Ex Parte Virginia and the Making of a National Landmark*. Softcover, indexed, illustrated. \$13.00.

Herman Melton, *Picks, Tracks, and Bauteaux*. Hardcover. \$24.00.

Lucille Payne, *Pittsylvania County, Virginia Inventories and Accounts Current 1790 - 1797*. Hardcover, indexed. \$24.00.

Mary Catherine Plaster, editor, *Idle Hens Don't Lay*. Historical Cookbook. Softcover. \$11.93.

Gray's Map of Chatham, Virginia 1878. Rare, full color print, suitable for framing. Many names and features. \$3.50.