

THE CAROLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Desk and Chair Donated to CHS Museum

Visitors to the Sidney E. King Arts Center are often attracted to the King mural depicting Guinea Station, the location of Stonewall Jackson's death. This mural is housed in the Community Meeting room, which also contains display cabinets holding items from the CHS Collection. On the wall beneath the mural, CHS members may admire a recent gift to our Collection. It is a fine oak office desk, accompanied by a wheeled desk chair with caned seat and back. The desk and chair were used by Edgar Beauragaude Collins. He was a Caroline County resident for most of his life (May 21, 1860-March 19, 1941). The items were recently donated to CHS by Paul Scott, great grandson of E.B. Collins, who had used it in his law office in Fredericksburg prior to his recent retirement. E.B. Collins was the last member of a family of 15 children, and came to Bowling Green at the age of 14. He served Caroline County as a deputy sheriff and as deputy treasurer for taxes. He also was engaged in insurance and real estate and was in demand as an auctioneer. His recollections of early days were published in the Caroline Progress, beginning with a sentence stating "Ladies wore hooped skirts". This article is contained in a notebook compiled by Mr. Scott and his wife, De'onne. The notebook holds family photos and other biographical information about E. B. Collins and is available for public perusal.

De'onne Scott also made a contribution to the CHS collection, a compilation of the works of Sidney E. King. After becoming acquainted with Sidney King's work she spent more than a year researching the artist and compiled a short biography and partial catalogue of his work. We have the resulting information in our Archives, available for interested parties' perusal in the CHS Processing room in the Arts Center on Fridays between 11 and 3.

April 27th Meeting at 3pm at Community Services Building

Come and meet Robert Cook of the Surrett Society who will speak on the Civil War.

July 27th Gathering to be Held at Belle Grove located just across the Port Royal Bridge in King George County. We will have a guided tour for a special \$5 per person rate. Meet there at 3pm.

This home, built in 1791, was recently renovated and is lovely. James Madison, 4th U.S. President was born on this plantation. Belle Grove is now open as a bed and breakfast inn and is available for weddings on the lawn near the Rappahannock River.

Latest Caroline County Book Still Available

The book "Heritage of Caroline County, Virginia 1727-2012" was published in October, 2013. It was an opportunity for people who have ties to Caroline County to share their stories, remembrances, and experiences about present, long-ago, and in-between times in the county. There are sections on families, veterans, churches, cemeteries, schools, organizations, and much more. There are also many pictures, including some of places and buildings that no longer exist.

This book came to fruition because of the work of a dedicated group of people who wanted to see the heritage of Caroline told in this manner. This group included Kathy Burchell, Joe and Joanne Anstett, Cleo Coleman, Carolyn Davis, Boyd and Barbara Wisdom, Al and Helen Johnson, Bobby and Joyce Johnson, Chip Johnson, Ollie Clark, Jim Purks, Mark and E. V. Garner, Arlene Miller, Grace Karish and Joe Durrett, Jr. plus many others who submitted articles and pictures.

The book was published by Walsworth Publishing. Limited copies are now available through **Historic Port Royal, Inc.** Please contact Carolyn Davis cookiejfd@gmail.com to order or call her at 804-742-5654 for further information. Books are \$65 plus postage.

ITEMS FROM THE CHS COLLECTION

We recently loaned 11 scrapbooks of the Caroline Education Association to be used by the Virginia Education Association in a historic display at their convention at the end of April. Items from the Thomas Haigh collection are still on loan to the Caroline Museum and Cultural Center and may be seen at their Courthouse Lane location until the end of the school year. Tom was a beloved Caroline County boy who was killed in action on 2-28-1943. Items on loan include his Pilot's log, Air Medal and Purple Heart. Also on display is the telegram notifying his mother of his death, and a picture of Tommy as an Air Cadet.

Going through the files in the collection, we recently found 2 very interesting documents. One is a hand-written letter to the Board of Supervisors dated May 4, 1911. It came from the Retreat for the Sick in Richmond as an enclosure with a bill for \$8.85 for "medicines and laundry" for Louanna Saunders from Oct. 12, 1910. Written by the bookkeeper for the Retreat of the Sick, Miss S.C Ellett explains that Saunders was a patient of Dr. L.J. Head, who recommended applying to the supervisors for payment of the expenses. She concludes "I hope this is all right and that you will give it your attention". Of course we have no further information, which raises many questions in a curious mind.

Similarly, we have an "Article of Agreement" which is a teaching contract from the Port Royal School District dated Oct. 25, 1886. The printed form states that the teaching position is at the No. 9 white school house for the term of 5 months with a compensation

of \$30 per month. The standard contract form lists an average daily attendance at 20 pupils, with the "20" crossed out and "15" written in. The puzzling part of this document is the identity of the teacher. The name "M.L Kidd" is clear enough, but it is entered with a prefix which could either be "Wife" or "Miss". Because married women were not generally welcome in the teaching field, the likelihood is that she was a "Miss", but the handwriting looks more like "Wife". She was expected to open school "at 9 o'clock in the morning, give 30 minutes at 12 o'clock, and close the school at 3 ½ o'clock in the evening".

I will bring a copy of this document to the April meeting, and invite your examination of it. We enjoy coming across such interesting documents, and would welcome members to join in the task of "historic decoders" as we sort through the files of People, Places, Events, Churches, etc. in our files. Recently we had the satisfaction of locating a photo of Mica school for someone searching for it to use in the Heritage Book. We work on Fridays from 11-3. Please contact me if you are interested.

Carolyn Roth, for the Collection Committee 804-633-6222

Caroline Forest Land and Development of the Timber Industry

In 1607, the land of Virginia was covered with forest. The Indians sometimes allowed the forest to burn to improve the wildlife habitat. The early white settlers began to clear the forest to build cabins, to use the wood for fuel and to clear the land to grow crops. Wood was also used to build ships and used for plank roads. The lack of fertilizer and no till farming that we have today allowed the land to wear out, thus new land was cleared of trees to gain fresh more fertile farm land.

Early homes were built with timber that was cut by hand. The men doing the sawing would dig a pit so one man would be in the pit at one end of the saw and the other standing on top of the log. The early power in this country was water and water wheels were used to generate the power to turn the cogs at the early grist mills used to grind corn meal. Some sawmills were powered by wheels turned by the water. A sawmill using water power was near the grist mill at Broaddus Pond near Bowling Green.

When the sills in barns and old homes needed repair and replacement, the carpenters would often comment on the fine old wood they found in the homes and they described it as "original growth" timber. The forest land was an important part of the historical economic growth of Caroline county and it still is important in 2014. Timber was used in the early homes and buildings. Many wooden railroad ties were used to lay the tracks when the rail road came through Caroline in the 1830's, and wood was used as fuel for the train steam engines.

The railroads provided a means to transport wood products out of the county. There was a need for excelsior used to pack dishes and used as padding in furniture, therefore

there was a need for pulpwood which was cut in four foot length. This provided a large economic opportunity, and excelsior mills were established at the five train stations in Caroline –Ruther Glen, Penola, Milford, Woodford and Guinea. This provided jobs for wood cutters, wood haulers, mill workers and railroad employees and income for landowners. There were several excelsior mills at some of the train stations. The use of plastic chips for packing was introduced and all the excelsior mills in Caroline had closed by 1970. There is still a need for pulp wood for paper, card board boxes and pressed wood and you see pulp wood being hauled in tree length size to mills outside of Caroline.

The automobiles and trucks began to arrive in Caroline in the early 1900's and likewise sawmills with fuel powered engines arrived. Sawmills were moved to the forest sites to cut the tracts of timber. The sawmill workers still used cross cut saws with a man at each end and mules and horses to pull and snake the logs to the mill in the 1940's. It was also the usual policy to establish sleeping shacks and a cooking shack at the mill sites and the workers went to the site Monday morning and returned home on Friday night.

There were a lot of changes by **sawmill owners and loggers** in the timber industry in the 20th Century. Power saws replaced the old cross cut saws. The industry developed skidders with motor engines to drag the logs in place of mules. These early skidders had metal and narrow wheels which rutted the land. These were changed to use larger and wider rubber tires to better protect the soil from ruts and erosion. The changes continued, and by the 1960's, the mills were not moved to the forest. The logs are now cut and hauled to stationary mills. There are three operating stationary mills in Caroline in 2014. **Tree Cutter** machines with saw heads were developed to have steel arms encircle the tree while it is being cut and then lay the tree down. The trees are then dragged to the loading deck by **Skidder** operators and then picked up by the **Knuckleboom Loader** with the swing arm to cut off the limbs, cut the logs in lengths to be hauled and to be piled in like piles, and then to be picked up and loaded on log trucks and hauled to stationary mills, sometimes out of the county.

The **landowners** have improved the methods for planting new forest and have become “**tree farmers**” with improved management methods. In the Great Depression in the 1930's, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) had a massive program to plant trees and to build fire roads. Before power equipment arrived, only the best trees were cut and the crooked, stunted and junk trees were left and the new growth coming up naturally had to fight for daylight and it took many years to grow. The new equipment now allows the forest to be clear cut to provide better access for new planting and provides sunlight for the new crop of trees. The land is prepared for planting by burning or spraying with herbicide to kill all the undesirable growth before planting new trees. The Virginia Department of Forestry has continued over the years to improved tree seedling genetics to increase growth and production. After trees are planted and there is undesirable hardwood growth, herbicide can be sprayed by hand or from the helicopter to kill the

undesirable hardwood so it will not compete for nutrients and sunlight with the planted pines. Loblolly Pine is the predominant tree planted in Caroline. Forty years ago, 800 seedlings were planted per acre-too many. Now, about 480 seedlings are planted per acre to prevent overcrowding. The pine grows faster and will provide a payoff sooner than hardwood. If the trees are found to be too crowded, a “pre-commercial thinning” can be accomplished by a group of men to thin out the trees and to also cut down the undesirable trees. This is usually accomplished when the stand is about seven years old. When the trees are about fifteen to eighteen years old, a “commercial thinning” should be conducted so the remaining trees will continue to grow better. The trees being removed are usually sold as pulp wood and provide some money to the landowner. There may be a need for a second “commercial thinning” before a clear-cut is accomplished to sell the saw logs after the trees have been planted for about forty years. **The good news** is that the tree farmer using the new management procedures will grow nearly three times the **weight** of timber an acre than was produced 70 years ago.

The payment for timber used to be so much per **board foot** for pine, oak or poplar or so much per **cord** for pine or hardwood pulpwood. Now the trucks haul the timber to sawmills that have scales for timber trucks and the payments are now paid based on the **weight** of the timber.

The **Virginia Department of Forestry** has a true interest to improve the pine seedlings, to improve timber production, to preserve water quality, to prevent land erosion, to provide fire prevention procedures and to eliminate pine bark beetles or other forest diseases and to maintain the land in the county set aside for rural preservation. The Virginia Department of Forest provides some cost share funds to the landowner for site preparation, planting seedlings, herbicide spray and pre-commercial thinning to promote these worthy goals. They also monitor the harvest of the forest to see that the Best Management Practices (BMP) are followed so trees are not cut too close to streams leaving a barrier to reduce the pollution of streams and to see that the land is not harmed with excessive ruts and washes causing erosion. The Virginia Department of Forest also monitors to insure seed trees are left or that new seedlings are set.

When the farm lands wore out and the small farmers left in the 1930's and 1940's, the pulpwood mill owners often bought the land with the pulp wood as the landowner did not want to pay taxes on worn out land. When the older farmers died or the families left the land, the **timber companies** (Chesapeake, Westvaco, Bear Island, Gladfelder, and Flippo) began to buy land in the 1950's and 1960's. These timber companies had mills and also bought timber from other land owners. Chesapeake had a large pulp mill in West Point. As the price of land increased, the Board of Directors/ Stock Holders of the timber companies considered the expected gain of growing timber held for 30 years versus the price they could get for the land. Chesapeake sold their mill at West Point in the 1990's and the mill owners have changed frequently since then. Chesapeake also sold their forest

lands to John Hancock Insurance Company who in turn sold some of it to other private investors. Westvaco, Gladfelder and Bear Island also sold timber land in Caroline.

The bad news is that investors in forest lands used for tree farming face a number of challenges. The length of time it takes to grow timber to receive a payoff on the investment plus the chance of hurricane, tornado, forest fire or pine bark beetle damage and increasing real estate taxes add to this uncertainty. The improved tree farming methods increased the supply of timber in the U.S. and kept the price for timber down. Also, the Canadian government owns most of the timberland in Canada and sells lumber at a reduced price in the U. S. The reduced number of housing starts since 2006 greatly reduced the demand for timber and the price of lumber went down significantly. The use of metal and PCV- plastic products in building also decrease the need for timber. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Directory listed the names of twenty-one saw mill operators in Caroline County in 1881. Three saw mills in Caroline (Calvert Lumber, Brooks, and Moore's) closed in the last 10 years leaving three mills (Jones, Knighton and Chenault) in Caroline in 2013. Flippo's Mill in Doswell reduced their timber buying due to the recession. The International Paper Corp announced in 2009 that they were closing their large mill in Franklin. Woodfuels Virginia wood-chip and pellet mill in Mineral closed. Reduced mills to buy the timber have hurt the price and sale of timber.

Caroline County like other counties have a **Land Use Tax** for **agricultural land** and **forest land** to recognize the value of maintaining the "rural preservation" (RP) land. The concept keeps the real estate tax lower on land used for agriculture and forest as the demand for tax money expenditures for schools, emergency services and the sheriff is much less per acre than towns, subdivisions and commercial properties. The **Caroline County Board of Supervisors** increased spending and the Caroline County debt was higher than one hundred million dollars by 2011. Expect higher taxes. The **Caroline Commissioner of Revenue** increased the Land Use Tax on agriculture and forest land in 2011 and the taxes now paid on an acre of forest land nearly doubled the amount paid in 2010. The beavers reintroduced by the government have been detrimental to the forest land owners. Small brooks and streams have been dammed by beavers causing large marshes that will not grow trees and the beavers cut the trees by the marshes further reducing the value of the forest land and marshes the land owner is paying taxes on.

Good News: Trees and wood are a renewable energy resource. Trees can be replaced by tree farming in about forty years unlike coal, oil and gas. Dominion Virginia Power is converting coal burning power stations to burn leftover wood waste in Southampton, Altavista and Hopewell. The Potomac Supply LLC mill in Westmoreland and International Paper Corp mill in Franklin are back in business.