

# THE CAROLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January 2013 Vol. 34 Issue 1

## The Society Meets

**Sunday, 26 January at 3 p.m. in the Caroline County  
Community Services Center.**

**Guest speaker will be Hal Stuart of Newtown. He is a published author and an expert on sectional furniture. He has a great focus on history and antiques. Bring a friend and join us for this interesting discussion!**

## CHS BOARD ADOPTS MISSION STATEMENT

The Caroline Historical Society Board of Directors met on January 8, 2014 at the Museum (now housed next door to the Sidney King Art Center on the Courthouse Lawn). A mission statement that explains the Society's Museum Collection policies was agreed upon and adopted as follows: "The purpose of the Caroline Historical Society shall be to preserve, protect, display and store three-dimensional objects, art, books, photographs and papers pertaining to the history of Caroline County and its citizens. CHS will make these items available to citizens, scholars, museums and educational institutions for study, display and research." Accession and De-accession policies and procedures were also adopted. Carolyn Roth, chair of the accessioning team presented the report. She has worked closely with team members and Bernard Collins, CHS president. The Board was very appreciative of their fine work.

## Caroline County Historical Society Annual Award

In 1999, the Society started a program to recognize one person, persons, organization or group for their efforts to promote and foster the history of Caroline County by writing, publishing, painting, exhibiting, restoring, or organizing open houses or tours and activities which enhance, preserve and highlight the history of Caroline County, Virginia. The Awards Committee is composed of Ray Campbell, Bernard Collins and Walton Mahon. The first award was presented to Sidney Eugene King for the year 1999.

Marion Woodfork Simmons has been selected to receive this annual award for the year 2013. Ms. Simmons will be presented the award at the Caroline Historical Society **meeting** at the Caroline County Community Services Center on **January 26, 2014** at 3

p.m. Ms. Simmons will make some comments and she will have copies of her book on Union High School for sale.

## **Marion Woodfork Simmons**

Marion Woodfork Simmons has a strong interest in genealogy. Her research led her to Caroline County, Virginia which was the home of her paternal ancestors.

She established a web site ([www.woodforkkgenealogy.com](http://www.woodforkkgenealogy.com)) which documents valuable historical information on Caroline history. This includes information on Fort A. P. Hill including property, churches and graves; the Freedman's Bureau including a register of colored citizens in Caroline in 1866; the USO Highway Number 2 Club; research resources; the Union High School history project and other interesting facts.

Ms. Simmons was one of several interviewers who compiled facts for the **Wealthy in Heart: Oral History of Life Before Fort A. P. Hill** book which provides interesting facts about the life styles of people before the land was taken as a military reservation.

She researched the deeds on many properties where schools were built by the local citizens of Caroline which were transferred to the Caroline School Board and later sold when the schools were disbanded. This information was of great value when an article on **Education, Academies & Schools in Caroline** was published in the July 2012 Caroline Historical Society News Letter. Ms. Simmons has published several articles in the Caroline Historical Society News Letters over the last few years.

She has been interviewed by the local news media on her research and she has given presentations to various groups and provided tips on resources for research and the value of documenting and preserving local history.

A jewel of her achievements is **Memories of UNION HIGH-An oasis in Caroline County, Virginia 1903-1969** which she published in 2011, The timeliness of her research not only allowed her to interview many of the students of the school who were in the segregated school system, but she was also able to gather facts from the older teachers and administrators. This 156 page book with many facts, interviews and interesting photos will preserve and highlight an important part of Caroline history.

Ms. Simmons has been recognized for her outstanding achievements by the Caroline Board of Supervisor's and by the USA Best Book Awards and the National Indie Excellence Books Awards. She was the recipient of the AAHGS Meritorious Achievement Award for 2012 for her significant and measurable contribution to African American history and genealogy.

Marion Woodfork Simmons is most deserving and is presented the Caroline Historical Society Award for the year 2013 for her tremendous efforts to research, document, promote and preserve the History of Caroline County, Virginia.

**Bernard Collins, CHS President**

## **Membership Dues**

Please send a check now for your annual dues for 2014 to The Caroline Historical Society, P O Box 324, Bowling Green VA 22427. Dues are \$15 a person, \$20 for a family and \$200 for a life membership. **Special thanks to Jerry and Peggy Brown who became Life Members in 2013.**

### **Judge J. Peyton Farmer 1933-2013**

James Peyton Farmer was born November 7, 1933 in a house across the street from the courthouse in Bowling Green on the spot where the Pitts Mann Building is located today. He was born four years after the stock market crash in 1929 and he heard first hand about the hard times during the depression. President Roosevelt started his fireside chats over the radio in 1933 to tell about the “new deal” and the start of the CCC, FDIC, REA, TVA and Social Security that began in 1935. The new route U. S. 301 was being built from Bowling Green to Hanover in the early 1930’s.

Peyton remembers Pearl Harbor, the troops from A. P. Hill in Bowling Green during the War, and the USO building where he learned to play ping-pong. While in the second grade, he remembers selling savings stamps and war bonds and he won a \$25 U. S. War Bond for selling the most. He remembered writing to his friend Billy Gray who was away in service. Billy returned and helped Peyton learn to play baseball and took him to Yankee games. Peyton began to work at gas service stations at age 12 and did this part time through high school. He attended Bowling Green Baptist Church and he is still a member.

Peyton’s family built a home across the road from Caroline High School. Peyton entered the newly installed eighth grade curriculum in 1947. He was in the first class to attend school for twelve years rather than eleven years in Caroline and he graduated in 1952. Peyton was a highly qualified student and an excellent athlete. He started on the first team as a freshman in football, basketball and baseball. He played on the first Caroline football team when football was brought to Caroline in 1948 under Coach Smokey Stover. Lights were installed on the Caroline High School by a private association during this period so football and baseball were played at night for the first time in Caroline.

He entered the University of Richmond and graduated in 1956. He then attended the

T. C. Williams Law School at the University of Richmond and graduated in 1959. He worked part time at the University of Richmond post office while he was a student for seven years. He also worked during the summers at the REC in Bowling Green to help pay for his schooling.

He married Jean Dresden Anderson on August 9, 1958. Jean was from Loudon County, Virginia and graduated from West Hampton College at the University of Richmond. Peyton and Jean have four children: Dresden, Valerie, Jacqueline and Anderson. Valerie took after her father as an athlete. She was the Virginia State Women's Tennis Champion in 1985 and 1986 and attended the University of North Carolina on a full tennis scholarship.

Before returning to Bowling Green to practice law, Peyton talked to the five lawyers in Bowling Green: Tom Blanton, Frank Beazley, Julian Mason, Ned Stehl and Bernard Mahon. Frank Beazley suggested that he join a large firm in Richmond to gain experience. Bernard Mahon encouraged him. The others did not say much as they probably did not want to encourage competition.

Bernard Mahon rented Peyton his first office in the old hotel in Bowling Green for five dollars a month. Peyton continued his private practice in Bowling Green for 21 years from 1959 until 1980.

He joined Bernard Mahon as a law partner in the years 1960 and 1961. He bought the law office on Court House lane from the Mahon's when Mr. Mahon got sick. He served as counsel for Union Bank and Trust Company and the Virginia Electric Company (now REC). He was the president of the Caroline Ruritan Club in 1967. He was the youngest person to serve as a Commonwealth Attorney in Virginia and he served as the Caroline County Commonwealth Attorney from 1961 until 1969.

He sold his office to Attorney Jack Lilly and he bought the Edwards home on Main Street and used it as his office. This is now the office of Attorney Kathy Hancock. He served as the Judge of the Caroline General District Court when it was a general and juvenile court combined from 1969 until 1980.

He was appointed as a Judge for the 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial District to serve in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. He served on the bench in Caroline, Essex, Hanover, Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond and Westmoreland from 1980 until 1982.

He served in the 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial District as a General District Judge and served from 1982 until 1984 in King George and Stafford. In 1984, he served as a Judge in the General District Courts in Caroline and Hanover until 1990.

There had never been a Circuit Court Judge appointed from Caroline County. This was a political obstacle, as the Lawyers Associations usually make recommendations on the appointments by the legislature. The larger number of lawyers in the Fredericksburg association from Fredericksburg usually guided the appointments.

In 1990, Judge J. Peyton Farmer was the first person from Caroline appointed as a Circuit Court Judge. He was sworn in July 1 1990 and served in the high position of a Circuit Court Judge in the 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. He retired in July 1999. After retiring, Judge Farmer continues to serve as a substitute Circuit Court Judge in the 15<sup>th</sup> District. He served about 100 days as a substitute Circuit Court Judge in year 2005.

I have been fortunate to have known Judge Peyton Farmer for many years. He is a native son and solid citizen of Caroline County. He continued to excel in his legal career, and to serve in such a high position of trust, honor and authority as a Circuit Court Judge in the Commonwealth of Virginia was a great achievement.

**(I wrote this in 2006. My good friend Judge Farmer passed away Nov. 13, 2013.)**

**Bernard Collins**