

CAROLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

July 2014

Caroline County, Virginia

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The Society will meet Sunday, July 20, at 3 p.m. at Belle Grove Plantation, 9221 Belle Grove Drive, King George, Virginia 22485.

July 20th Meeting to be Held at Belle Grove Plantation, located just across the Port Royal U.S. 301 bridge in King George County. Belle Grove is the second left turn after crossing the James Madison Bridge. We will have a guided tour for a special \$5 per person rate. Meet there at 3 p.m. PLEASE NOTE THE 20TH IS THE WEEKEND BEFORE THE USUAL MEETING DATE.

This home, built in 1791, was recently renovated and is lovely. James Madison, fourth 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.

The Lorne Post Office

One of the many exhibits found in the Caroline Historical Society Museum located in the Sidney King Arts Center in Bowling Green, Virginia, is of Caroline County post offices. In April, Dale Brittle, CHS Historian, spoke with Ms. Gady's Norris who offered to share her memories and photographs of the Lorne post office and store. Following is an excerpt of what she wrote. Her photograph and a more recent one accompany this article. The CHS welcomes donations of historical interest and the Society thanks Ms. Norris for her contributions.



“When I was living next door in the 1940s and 1950s, the house next to the post office and the post office were owned by Ernest and Gertrude Blake Young. The house burned but the post office was not affected and remained open until sometime in the late 1960s. After the death of Ernest Young, brother to my grandfather James Edward Young, his children, Ennis Young and Monroe Young, ran the store and his daughter, Estelle, was postmistress.

“If you look carefully at the picture, it was taken at the time of the fire next door and the front of the store seems to have a board across the upper section. Today the store has a sign in place of that board that reads, ‘Young's Store, Lorne Post Office, Established October 15, 1914.’



Lorne post office today

“I have been told many times that my great-grandfather Franklin Trainham, who lived in the area of St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Ruther Glen, was the carpenter who built the building. I know he was a carpenter and did build other structures in the area of Ruther Glen.

“My father was Joseph William Wright, son of George V. and Hester Trainham Wright, grandson of Annie Young and Franklin Trainham. Interestingly enough, I don't think my mother's family knew much about the Wrights at the time the store was built but my mother met

my father in the late 1930s. I'm not sure if Annie Young Trainham was a relative of the Youngs. She operated the store and post office.”— *Gladys Norris*

CHS Exhibits and New Project

When visiting the Sidney King Arts Center in Bowling Green, Virginia, folks are encouraged to see the Caroline Historical Society Museum located in the same complex. Presentations relative to the town of Bowling Green and the 1955 fire, county schools past and present, Caroline athletes who have had distinguishing baseball careers, Caroline post offices and train stations, the Stonewall Jackson Shrine and local artist Sidney King, farm implements before electrification, and an extensive visual display of communities and people before the establishment of Camp A. P. Hill are on display along with written documentation accompanying each exhibit.

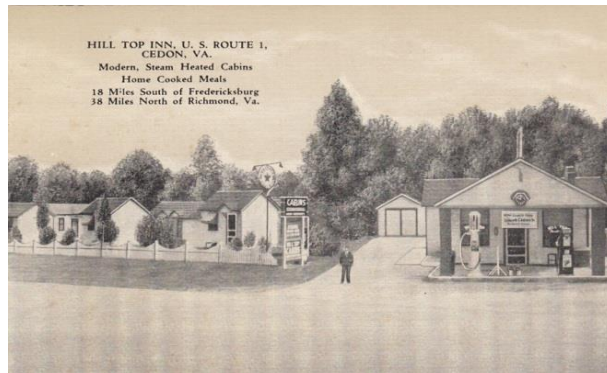
The Caroline Historical Society is working on a new project, one which will recognize outstanding women in the county. The month of March has been designated National Women’s Month. The CHS venture will highlight outstanding Caroline women during this period each year. A notebook and file will be kept on each person and be archived for historical research. The Society encourages county residents to submit names of women they believe worthy of consideration. The women should be or have been residents of the county, educated or worked in Caroline, and have made outstanding contributions in the fields of medicine, politics, sports, government, business, the arts, literature, etc. These women may have lived in historical times or in present times.

The contributor is asked to provide a brief biological sketch with supportive information for the nominee. An accompanying photograph will be most welcome. A CHS committee will receive, review, and study each candidate. Each selectee will be honored. The name with accompanying information will be placed in a three ring binder and available for public review. Several of these women will be selected each March for special honors.

The project will be on-going. Women may be added at any time. Upon the recommendation of the CHS Historian, the Board will make final decisions. All contributions will become the property of the Caroline Historical Society. Members of the Society who may be interested in working on the project are encouraged to contact Dale Brittle (dalebrittle@verizon.net).— *Dale Brittle, Historian*

Early Motels in Caroline County

Tim O’Gorman recently came to the Caroline Historical Society display room to talk with us about motels. Mr. O’Gorman retired from the Department of Defense after serving 18 years as the director of the U.S. Army Quartermaster Museum at Fort Lee, Virginia. He had served before this at military installations in Germany and Texas.



Hill Top Inn, U.S. 1, Cedor, Virginia

Mr. O’Gorman has an interest in the old motels, tourist courts, tourist camps, and hotels that were located along U.S. Route 1 and U.S. Route 301 and which were built in the 1930s before Interstate 95 was built. Many motels were family-operated businesses.

Motels provided people traveling by automobiles a place to stay overnight and replaced taverns at the old stage coach stops. Shade trees, cool water, and showers were a luxury at the early motels and advertised as such. Air conditioners, in-room phones, and TVs were really a step up. Many of the old motels have been demolished. A couple in Caroline were used as a place for senior citizens to live. A few remain and some are used for weekly or monthly rentals.



Blue and Gray Dining Room and Cottages, U.S. 1, Ladysmith, Virginia

Thanks to the old postcard salesmen who traveled to these motels and took pictures of the them and sold the cards to motel owners, we have a record of them. Most front desks had these cards for sale so the traveler with a two-cent postage stamp could let the people back home know where they had been. Long-distance calls from a pay phone were expensive back then and the postcard was an alternative.



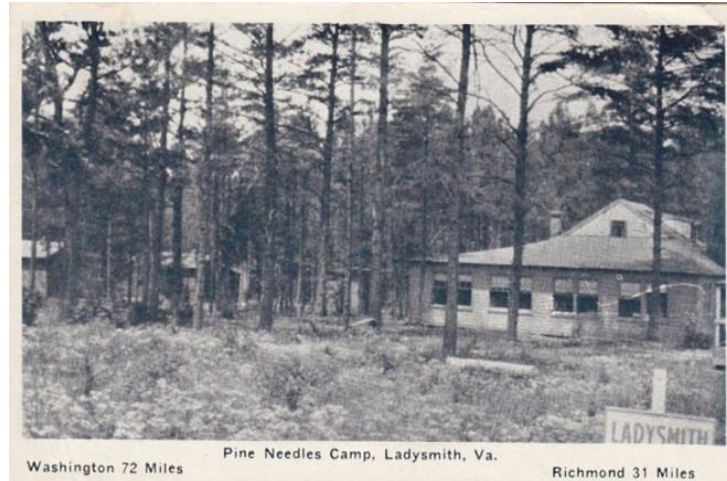
Blue and Gray Dining Room and Cottages today

What were the names of these motels and where were they located? The Caroline County Historical Guide Book published for the Jamestown Festival had advertisers listed in the book. There were seventeen listings of motels and tourist homes in Caroline in this 1957 book. Postcard collectors add to the list to give location and pictures. Dale Brittle has a collection and some of her motel cards with pictures are on display in the Caroline Historical Society. Mr. O’Gorman has a collection and some are shown with this article.



Bowling Green Grill & Rooms, U.S. 301, Bowling Green, Virginia

Mr. O’Gorman is working on a book he will publish with pictures. He has sent us some of the pictures. The proposed name of the book is “A Postcard History of Motels Along U.S. Highway 1 from Arlington to South Hill, 1920–1965” and it will have a chapter on Caroline County.



Pine Needles Camp, U.S. 1, Ladysmith, Virginia

A book on U.S. 301 motels may follow.—*Bernard Collins, June 2014*

More on the Lorne Post Office

Dale Brittle was intrigued a few weeks ago when she stopped to take a picture of a well-kept old building once used as the Lorne post office on Sunshine Road, Route 648, near Williamsburg Mill, about a half mile from U.S. Route 301. Ralph Emmet Fall, in his book “People, Postoffices and Communities in Caroline County, Virginia 1727-1969” describes many of these old communities with post offices. There were many post offices in Caroline. Lorne was the 67th post office established in Caroline. By 1969, Lorne was one of 13 post offices still remaining in Caroline when Fall’s book was published. The rural route delivery to road-side boxes reduced the need for post offices and only nine post offices remain in Caroline in 2014.

Country stores with a post office were the gathering places when many people walked or traveled by horse or mule. When there were small farms, more people lived in the vicinity of the country store. Many of the old country stores had rooms above the store or attached to the store as a home for the family operating the store and post office. As people left the community or used automobiles to go to work, these small stores went out of business. Some of these old store buildings are still standing but many have been demolished.

According to Ralph Emmet Fall, Mrs. Elizabeth Seay became the first Postmistress at Lorne in 1892 when the Lorne post office was opened to replace the Seaysville post office that had been in operation since 1880. Postmasters following Mrs Seay were William Ernest Young followed by his widow, Gertrude Blake Young, followed by Frank Elmer Bowie in 1942, followed by Mary Estelle Young in 1945. Mary Estelle Young was still the Postmistress in 1969 when Ralph Emmet Fall published his book.—*Bernard Collins*

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