



CAROLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

July 2017

Bowling Green, Virginia

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The Society will meet at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 23, 2017, at the Sidney E. King Art Center, 121 Main Street, Bowling Green, Virginia 22427

The Caroline Historical Society will have its quarterly membership meeting and “Open House” at the Sidney E. King Art Center. We will have a short business meeting and afterward recognize our guests of honor—local veterans of World War II. Refreshments will be provided for the open house and watermelons will be served on the courthouse lawn. Please bring a friend and enjoy the program, exhibits, refreshments, and fellowship.

Message from the President

These past few months have been a really busy time for the Caroline Historical Society (CHS).

As you know, our April membership meeting was held in conjunction with Caroline County’s 100th Anniversary of World War I and 75th Anniversary of World War II celebration event to honor veterans and families for their military service and sacrifices. It was a great event with many of our members receiving commemorative tokens and certificates on behalf of their family members who served during the World Wars. Future celebratory events are planned this year by the Caroline County staff and the towns of Bowling Green and Port Royal. Please check the events calendar in this newsletter for further details.

CHS, in cooperation with county’s commemoration plans, has filled 11 display cases with World Wars I and II memorabilia that includes pictures, weapons, medals, ribbons, flags, military gear, and “Home Front” items from Caroline County families. Even the walls are decorated with numerous framed photos of service men and women, pictures, insignia, military uniforms, and related items. One of the main attractions to our exhibit is the display of approximately 460 individual photos of service men and women from Caroline County whose pictures were published during World War II in *The Caroline Progress* newspaper. The original wooden blocks or “cuts” that were used to print these photos in World War II were given to the historical society over 20 years for preservation. Several months ago, through the generous donation of time, equipment, and material, Gary Billingsley and Billingsley Printing in Fredericksburg, Virginia, reprinted all of the wooden block images into regular photos. All of these photo images are currently on display for family and friends to try and identify. Thus far, we have had a very good response in the identification efforts from our visitors. The exhibits are not only meant to honor those that served during those terrible times but to further educate visitors on the events, people, hardships, and sacrifices that were endured by many in order that our generation and futures ones are guaranteed the continuation and enjoyment of our freedom. The grand opening of the exhibits was coordinated with the Memorial Day ceremony held in front of the Caroline County Courthouse in Bowling Green. The Sidney King Art Center/Caroline Historical Society had over 70 visitors on that day to view the new CHS exhibits and Sidney King paintings. It was a very enjoyable day for all who attended.

As a result of the displays and state/county celebration, CHS has recently received a number of donations from Caroline County residents whose family members served in World Wars I and II military service. One major, most unexpected, donation came from the Virginia Department of Historical Resources (DHR) in the form of 400 artifacts from the “Old Mansion” (Bowling Green Farm). The former owner had donated the artifacts to DHR, who in turn cataloged and photographed each one. Many of these historic pieces will be used in our future exhibits. We are truly grateful for the recent donations that are welcomed additions to our collection. CHS welcomes future donations that especially deal with local people, places, buildings, events, schools, or other artifacts significant to our history.—*Wayne Brooks* (804) 633-5217. wbrooks@bealenet.com



Gary Billingsley, of Billingsley Printing in Fredericksburg, printing the photos of Caroline County veterans from wooden block images.

Artifact Donations

Recent donations of artifacts were received from:

Herbert Ridgeway Collins—His military “Ike” jacket, trousers, and framed photo of him in uniform.

Conway and Karen Carter—World War II photos and documents of Carter family members.

Mrs. Lorenzo Boxley—World War II photo, military ribbons, pins, and insignia of Lorenzo Boxley.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR)—Donation of 400 artifacts from “Old Mansion” (Bowling Green Farm). The former owner had donated the artifacts to DHR, who in turn cataloged and photographed each item. Many of these historic pieces will be used in our future exhibits. The eight large boxes were delivered to us by Ms. C. Diane DeRoche, Ph.D., Chief Curator of DHR.

CHS Going Digital

CHS is now on social media with a FACEBOOK page. This is a further means of communication to promote our organization through photos of events, announcements, schedules for events, contact information, etc. If you are on social media, please “like” us and get your friends to like us as well.

CHS is also in the process of developing a Web site entitled www.carolinehistoricalsociety.org to use yet another means of promoting our organization and providing information to stimulate more interest in our local history and all good things to keep us growing. Once it is up and going, we would welcome suggestions on how to improve and expand our site. The Web site can be a major tool in building up membership and reaching out beyond the boundaries of Caroline County.

Annual Dues Reminder

As a reminder, please pay your annual membership dues, if you have not already done so. The dues for a regular (single) membership are \$15.00 for the year and \$20.00 a year for a family membership. Life membership is a one-time cost of \$200.00. Checks may be made out to “Caroline Historical Society” and mailed to Caroline Historical Society, PO Box 324, Bowling Green, VA 22427–0324. A membership in CHS would make a perfect gift to a friend or relative who appreciates local history and wants to be involved in preserving our past for the future.

Welcome New Members

CHS would like to welcome the following new members: Judi Hardin, Jo-Elsa Jordan, Troy and Heather Smith, and Ashby and Erin Brooks.

Childhood Memories of World War II

I was six years old in 1941 and lived with my parents on Brook Road in Richmond and attended Ginter Park School on Chamberlayne Avenue, which is still an active school. I remember that cloudy Sunday on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The paperboys with their strap-over-the-shoulder paper bags appeared in our neighborhood shouting, “Read all about it.” I sensed the grave concern shown by my parents.

There was a streetcar track in the median of Brook Road that came by from Ashland to downtown Richmond, as Ashland had been a summer resort area. This track was removed and the iron from the rails was used for the war effort. As the war progressed, there were times when long slow moving convoys of soldiers in jeeps and trucks came south down Route 1 and Brook Road heading to Norfolk on the way to Europe.

The air-raid warnings by siren required homes have black paper shades for the windows and only minimum light was used so the city was dark so it would not stand out for enemy bomber aircraft to find Richmond. Older men with white helmets served as air-raid wardens and roamed the streets to insure black-out compliance.

Newspapers, cardboard, and tin cans were collected by the schools for the war effort. I remember going house to house with my red wagon to collect papers and my mother helped me in the garage to tie the papers into bundles. Bellevue Theater would let children in free for the Saturday morning movie if they brought a tin can for the war effort collection. The paper that showed the can contents was removed and the top and bottom of the can were removed and placed in the can before it was stomped down flat with your foot. Before television, the newsreel before the main feature was the way you saw the news. A newsreel showing an American plane shoot down a Japanese plane with the rising sun on the side would always bring clapping and cheers from the kids in the audience waiting to see the Saturday morning western.

My grandparents lived in Caroline County and we would travel to Collins Pond on the weekends. Many roads were unpaved gravel roads and it was usual to see the horse or mule tracks in the road gravel. One Saturday morning there were military tank tracks in the road near Collins Pond as there had been a military training exercise that week between the red army and blue army and they had left the boundary of the A. P. Hill Military Reservation and came by Sparta and Kidds Fork.

Many families had members join or drafted into the military service. Families placed a blue star on their front door if they had a member serving. A gold star was shown if the member died in action. I had two first cousins serve in the military. Young single men were drafted first. My father was thirty-three with three children and was called for a draft physical. He had been shot in a hunting accident and many bird shot appeared in his X ray so he did not have to serve.

Small two-man enemy submarines were captured off our coastlines. One was on a flatbed truck for display by Miller and Rhoades downtown. If you bought a war savings bond stamp you could go by and peer at the dressed mannequins through the window of the lighted submarine. I cautiously peered in holding my mother's hand. You could buy a ten-cent stamp for your \$10 war bond book each Friday at school. I accumulated two \$10 war bonds by the end of the war.

Many items were rationed. Ration-book coupons were used to purchase sugar, shoes, gasoline, tires, and alcoholic beverages. The Caroline Historical Society has my mother's ration book.

In August 1945, when I was ten years old, I was using a mule with a cultivator to work 20 acres of corn near Kidds Fork. A black gentleman living on my father's farm was throwing dirt to the corn with a plow with our other mule. My great aunt, Miss Lina Wright, who made her living by selling eggs from her hens, listened to the noon WRVA radio news every day. She brought me a fruit jar of ice water after the news and told me the U.S. had dropped a big bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. I hoped it was a real big bomb and I found out later it was really large.

Service members wore their military uniforms when on leave. I was always attentive to hear the soldiers tell about their experiences. My cousin served in Europe and told me a lot.

You could not buy a new automobile from 1942 through 1945 as all the U.S. effort was used to build ships, planes, tanks, and jeeps. You had to put your name on an automobile dealers list and some waited two years to be able to purchase a new automobile. My dad's close friend owned an Oldsmobile dealership and dad purchased a new 1946 Oldsmobile with hydromantic drive. Most

cars before 1946 were stick shift with a clutch to change gears. People walked to our house in Richmond from blocks away to see a new car.

John Pavy lost his wife to T.B. before the war. He joined as a paratrooper as he wanted the extra money for jumping out of planes. He jumped many times with the 82nd Airborne, starting in North Africa and then Italy and France and was in Germany at the finish. He worked on our farm when I was a teenager and he had experienced a lot. He was a daring person and dug over 100 wells by hand and was lowered into the well by a rope and a hand-turned pulley. He walked with a limp from a parachute jump and I don't know if he ever applied for an injury pension.

In 1964, as a captain in the Air Force, I served and traveled with Master Sergeant Pitts. Pitts was a young soldier in the Philippines before the war. He was captured and held as a slave by the Japanese. He was young, tall, and strong and he survived his awful treatment but many perished. My mother told me about atrocities being committed by Japanese soldiers.

I know about the Japanese internment camps. I have read the history of the atrocities committed by the Japanese. I knew Master Sergeant Pitts. I know President Truman was criticized for dropping the atom bombs on Japan, but even though I'm a Republican, I would have voted for Harry Truman.—*Bernard Collins*

Future Events

September 20, 21, 22, 2017—State History Mobile visits Bowling Green.

September 23, 2017—"Big Band USO Dance" at Bowling Green Town Hall.

September 27, 2017—CHS board of directors meeting at 2 p.m., Sidney King Art Center, Bowling Green.

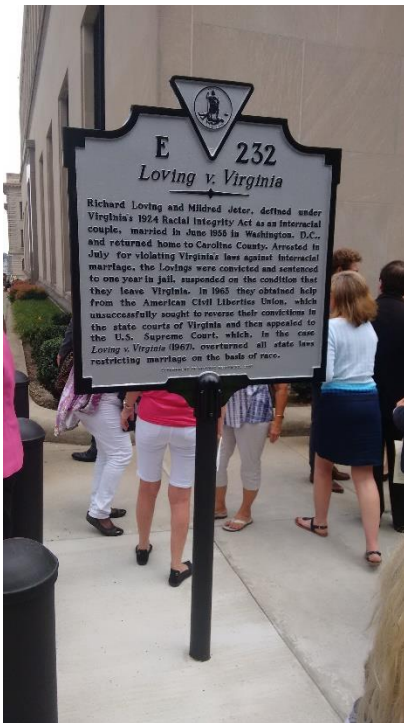
October 21, 2017—Bowling Green Harvest Festival, Bowling Green.

October 22, 2017—CHS Meeting, 3 p.m., Kilwinning Crosse Masonic Lodge, Bowling Green, guest speaker will be Herbert Ridgeway Collins.





A portion of the World War I and World War II exhibit displaying part of the 460 unknown Caroline County Veterans.



Historical Highway Marker dedicated in Richmond in honor of Richard and Mildred Loving. Caroline County Board Supervisors recently voted fund a similar marker to be installed in Caroline County.



Military items on display.

Eight boxes of artifacts from the Old Mansion were recently donated to CHS by the Department of Historic Resources. Left to right: Wayne Brooks, Kathy Burchell, Mandy Young, Carolyn Roth, and Dee DeRoche, Chief Curator with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.



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