



CAROLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

January 2018

Bowling Green, Virginia

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The Caroline Historical Society will meet at 3 p.m. on Sunday, January 28, 2018, in the Kilwinning Crosse Masonic Lodge located at 102 Chase Street, Bowling Green, Virginia 22427

Program for January 28, 2018

Kimberly (Kim) Curtis Campbell, well-known local author, will be presenting a PowerPoint program entitled "The Tale of a Tailor." This will be a very interesting program about a local businessman, Thomas W. Valentine, who was a tailor in the 1850s. Ms. Campbell has extensively researched the clothing of that era and utilized data from Mr. Valentine's personal ledger kept on customers and his work. Don't miss this very informative subject on local history and fashions of the mid-1800s.

Message from the President

I sincerely hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year. Those holidays are always a very special time to pause from our busy schedules and spend quality time with family and friends. It is also a time to give thanks for our many blessings, reflect on the true meaning of Christmas, and express the desire for good health and prosperity in the forthcoming year.

This new year is shaping up to be busier than 2017. We will continue with exhibits related to the celebration of the 100th anniversary of World War I and the 75th anniversary of World War II through the end of 2018. World War I and II memorabilia donations and loans continue to come in and we keep adding to the exhibits. This is our way to honor those men and women who served our country, and in many cases made the supreme sacrifice, to preserve our freedom and quality of life. If you have not had the opportunity to visit, bring your family or friends to learn more about the veterans, their families, and the hardships of war.

New CHS Web site – LIVE – <https://www.carolinehistoricalsociety.org> – Suggestions welcome.

The Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region has recently announced the establishment of "The Walton and Lacy Mahon Family Legacy Fund of the Community Foundation." This special fund was established by long time Caroline Historical Society member and county native Walton Mahon in honor of his wife, Marion Lacy Mahon and family. The purpose of the fund will be to support historic preservation, recreation, and youth in Bowling Green and Caroline County. Mr. Mahon and his late wife, Lacy, have always been intimately involved in local civic organizations and the Bowling Green Baptist Church. We commend Walt and his family for their generosity and dedication to preserving and improving the quality of life in Caroline County for future generations. Thanks, Walt!

R. Wayne Brooks – President, wbrooks@bealenet.com (804) 513-9069

CHS Holds Holiday Open House and Local Authors' Book Signing

CHS held a Holiday Open House and Local Authors' Book Signing on December 16, 2017, at the Sidney E. King Arts Center. Five local authors were present to sell and autograph their books that included local history and novels of romance and mystery. Authors present included Herbert Ridgeway Collins, Mary Tod Haley Gray, Amy Lilly, Kay D. Brooks, and Carolyn Roth. CHS members provided cookies, brownies, hot chocolate, and warm cider. As a fund raiser, CHS sold pewter Christmas tree ornaments with images of local historic homes and educational institutions. There are still a few ornaments remaining. Over 70 people attended the event that ended just as the annual Bowling Green Christmas Parade started at 5 p.m. CHS is already making plans for another local authors' book signing in 2018. Please try to make it for these family oriented holiday events.



Author Herbert R. Collins



Author Mary Tod Haley Gray



Author Amy Lilly

The McLaughlins of Caroline County

John McLaughlin (or MacLachlan) was born in 1745 in Morven, Argyll, Scotland. He was a Highlander. I have not been able to ascertain his father's name or its spelling, but hope to learn more on another trip to the Highlands this spring. Many records were lost after the rebellion of 1745, which terminated with the Battle of Culloden. If you are not up on your "Outlander" episodes, it may be compared to our Gettysburg. The Proscription Act of 1746 and almost a century of abuse known as the Clearances certainly warned what was to come in 1865 in the South with Reconstruction, especially in Virginia.

John married Sarah Mackie (McKee/MacKay clan), they had several children in Scotland, then emigrated to Virginia by way of the Caribbean islands in 1770. They were my 5x great grandparents. Their first-born Virginia son, also named John, was my 4x great grandfather. He married well for a young man with no title or wealth. His wife was Mary Overton Minor, or Molly. Molly was the daughter of Capt. Vivian Minor. Though her father had two homes in Caroline, Jericho and Springfield, she spent much time at her ancestral home, Topping Castle, in western Caroline County on the north bank of the North Anna River. Topping Castle was built in the late 1600s. All that remains now is a fireplace and portions of an English basement and an overgrown cemetery, populated during the warmer months by copperheads, a lot of them.

Remains of Topping Castle

A cousin, Matthew Fontaine Maury, also spent time at Topping Castle. It is reputed he demonstrated his idea for a boat that operated underwater using a bathtub at Topping Castle for the demonstration. Father of the U.S. Naval Observatory and later primary proponent for the creation of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, he served as a senior officer in the Confederate Navy. Was he involved with the first successful submarine, the *Hunley*? I can find no direct evidence he was, though his responsibility in the Confederate Navy was as head of coast, harbor, and river defenses for the Confederacy. He invented torpedo mines, which sank more Federal ships than all Confederate ships combined did.



Capt. Vivian Minor gave a large portion of the Topping Castle land to his son-in-law, John, who later bequeathed it to his son, George McLaughlin (my 3x great grandfather). George farmed it with his wife, Mildred Duke McLaughlin. They had two children, James Alexander and Molly, named for her grandmother, Mary Overton Minor McLaughlin. When his wife died, George married her sister, Huldah.

During the War Between the States, James Alexander McLaughlin (2x great) enlisted in the Confederate Army. He ultimately rode with the Caroline Dragoons as a cavalryman. Wounded in a skirmish near Gettysburg, he spent the rest of the war in Richmond's Jackson Field Hospital.

My paternal great grandfather, James Asbury Tilman, was there at the same time due to injuries sustained at Gettysburg. I do not know if they were acquainted. After the war, McLaughlin returned to Caroline and his wife, Mildred Emma Duke McLaughlin. Tilman returned to his native Powhatan County where his son, my grandfather, Dr. Julian Edward Tilman was born.

James Alexander and Emma acquired land on Pneumansend Creek and farmed it with their children during Reconstruction; their primary crops being tobacco and sweet potatoes. The farm is now part of Fort A. P. Hill and was razed by the Army. The outline of the house and a few chimney bricks remain.



Of their ten children, the eldest, Ridgeway, became a West Virginia railroad superintendent and was murdered by a man who had just been fired by the railroad. The second oldest, Olive, married and went west. She settled and lived in what was then called Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory, later the State of Oklahoma.

James Alexander McLaughlin

A "middle" child may have been the most interesting: James Alexander McLaughlin, Jr., known as "JA," went west also. Well before the turn of 1900, he was exploring Hawaii. My grandfather told me that JA returned to visit his family in Richmond briefly, passed around gold nuggets he dug during the Klondike Gold Rush, and disappeared forever. It seems he disappeared to Sausalito, California, living until the mid-1950s, a retired adventurer.

James Alexander McLaughlin, Jr.



One of the last to be born to James and Emma was Alma Maury McLaughlin, petite at 4'11" and feisty. Always a history buff, I pestered my great grandmother, every time I saw her, to talk about the old days on Pneumansend Creek Farm during Reconstruction.

The adjoining property was Locust Hill, the Garrett farm. When I was young she would tell me about taking a walking stick to fend away copperheads (seems a theme throughout) and walk through the woods to the Garrett place. There, Mrs. Garrett would tell her what became my favorite story, when the “damnyankees” came and burned the tobacco barn down and killed Mr. John Wilkes Booth and did not reimburse for any damages. Miss Alma was always quick to note that Southern ladies did not curse. Damnyankees was not a curse word. I believed her then and now, because I so trust everything I learned from her and her son, my maternal grandfather, Walter McLaughlin Joyner, “Mack.”

After the war, James Alexander McLaughlin was a wounded veteran from the losing side. He had a limp that lasted the rest of his days. He farmed until they lost Pneumansend Creek Farm. They, the last of the Highland McLaughlins, left Caroline County and went to Richmond. He worked for the Census Bureau, the Post Office, and was a Deputy U.S. Marshal. Tough people, they were survivors for sure. Blood mixed with Highland heather, saltwater from Loch Fyne, and a lot of red clay from over a hundred years in Caroline County. Not such a bad mixture, I believe. — *G. Wayne Tilman*

G. Wayne Tilman recently retired from the U.S. intelligence community. His McLaughlins, in 1770, were the last of his family to come to Virginia; the Tilman’s and Joyner’s arrived at Jamestown Colony. He earned baccalaureate and master’s degrees from the University of Richmond and is a full-time author, with eleven novels published.



Author, *G. Wayne Tilman*

**Thomas Paine Westendorf,
Caroline County Native and Composer of
“I’ll Take You Home Again Kathleen”**

Since our early beginning, Caroline County, Virginia, has the great fortune of being able to claim as “home” many famous people who have contributed to the history of our nation, state, and county. One such person was music composer Thomas Paine Westendorf, who was born in Bowling Green, Virginia, on February 23, 1848. His parents, Bernard and Mary (Parham) Westendorf, married in Caroline County on October 4, 1842. After the War Between the States,

the Westendorf family moved to Chicago where Thomas studied music and learned how to play the piano and violin. By 1871, he was teaching music at the Indiana House of Refuge for Juvenile Offenders. That same year, the Westendorf family moved to the town of Plainfield, in Hendricks County, Indiana. On May 21, 1873, Thomas Paine Westendorf married Jennie Morrow in Hendricks County, Indiana.

As the story goes, in 1875 Westendorf wrote his famous song, "I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen," while his wife was vacationing in her hometown of Ogdensburg, New York. It was first played that same year and soon became a popular ballad. The song, although written by a German-American, has always been considered as in the style of an Irish ballad, especially with the use the name "Kathleen." Thomas Westendorf died on April 19, 1923, in Chicago and is buried there in Mount Greenwood Cemetery.

Over the years, the Westendorf song, "I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen," has been recorded by many singers, musical groups, and orchestras. Artists such as Bing Crosby, Elvis Presley, Merv Griffin, Slim Whitman, the Mitch Miller Orchestra, Johnny Cash, Daniel O'Donnell, and Irish tenor Josef Locke are but a few who made the popularity of this song grow over the years. The song has also been sung by various artists in feature films and TV programs. A recording of this song will be played at the January 28th membership meeting.

Lyrics for "I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen"

I'll take you home again Kathleen across the ocean wild and wide
To where your heart has ever been since first you were my bonny bride
The roses all have left your cheek, I've watched them fade away and die
Your voice is sad when e'er you speak and tears bedim your loving eyes.

And I will take you back, Kathleen, to where your heart will feel no pain
And when the fields are fresh and green, I will take you to your home Kathleen.

I know you love me, Kathleen dear, your heart was ever fond and true
I always fear when you are near, that life holds nothing dear but you
The smiles that once you gave to me, I scarcely ever see them now
Though many, many times I see a darkening shadow on your brow.

And I will take you back, Kathleen, to where your heart will feel no pain
And when the fields are fresh and green, I will take you to your home Kathleen.

Passing Post Office (1894–1901)

There has been a great deal of discussion over the years about the origin of the community in Caroline known as "Passing" and "Passing Road." The exact reason for the name may never be determined but Passing Road leads to an intersection in the eastern part of the county that once had a post office named "Passing" that served approximately 200 people.

According to the information provided in the book entitled *"People, Post Offices and Communities in Caroline County, Virginia, 1727–1969"* compiled by the Reverend Ralph Emmett Fall – 1989. He states, "May 24, 1894, William George Davis made application for a

post office to be known as PASSING, stating that the former name was EAGLE'S NEST. On October 17, 1901 an unsigned application was made to change the site to CENTRAL POINT."

The Reverend Fall's book goes on to say that Eagle's Nest Post Office was established in 1838 for this same community until changed to Passing in 1894.

One can assume the road leading to the Passing Post Office was named "Passing Road." Evidently, the road name "Passing" did not change even when the Passing Post Office closed and was renamed in 1901. Caroline residents still refer to the intersection of Routes 665 and 625 as "Passing."

To say the name "Passing," in this situation, has anything to do with race relations or a mixed race is, in my opinion, pure conjecture. I am not aware of any documentation that verifies or implies that "Passing Road" or "Passing" was named to signify a racial mixture.

There are many local names for communities, intersections, or places in Caroline that we may never know the source or true reason how or why it was named. I have always wondered about places like Frog Level, No Man's Corner, and Ideal, just to mention a few. The search for answers will continue and any information would be appreciated.— *R. Wayne Brooks*

New Members

The Caroline Historical Society would like to welcome the following new members:

Will Hiley, Life Membership, Washington, D.C.
Rick and Colleen Longfellow, Regular Membership, Ruther Glen, Virginia.
G. Wayne Tilman, Regular Membership, Ellenton, Florida.

Dates to Remember

- **January 28, 2018** – CHS Membership Meeting
- **April 21, 2018** – CHS Membership Meeting. Special Saturday meeting and tour
- **April 26, 2018** – Fort A. P. Hill – Earth Day – CHS will participate

Annual Dues

As a reminder, please pay your annual membership dues, if you have not already paid. The dues for a regular (individual) 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. Please consider investing in a life membership. A CHS membership would make a great gift. Checks may be made out to "Caroline Historical Society" and mailed to Caroline Historical Society, PO Box 324, Bowling Green, VA 22427-0324.