



# **CAROLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

April 2024

P.O. Box 324, Bowling Green, Virginia 22427

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The Caroline Historical Society, Inc., will meet at 3 p.m. on Sunday, April 28, 2024, in the Caroline Community Services Center, 17202 Richmond Turnpike, Milford, VA

## **Secretariat – Caroline’s Native Son**



Kathy Beard, Caroline County Tourism Manager, will be the guest speaker for the April meeting of the Caroline Historical Society. Her focus will be providing a brief history of Secretariat and the importance of this horse in Caroline history. She will also provide highlights of upcoming events and explain the important role of tourism in Caroline County.

Secretariat was born in Caroline County in the early morning of March 30, 1970, at Meadow Farm. Secretariat was sired by Bold Ruler from Something Royal. The greatest Triple Crown Champion of all time is a Virginia-bred horse from Caroline County. The foaling shed in which Secretariat was born still stands.

Meadow Farm was owned by Christopher Chenery. Meadow Farm was a growing stud farm and race horse breeding operation that also produced Riva Ridge a year before the birth of Secretariat. Riva Ridge went on to win two of three Triple Crown races in 1972. By this time, the management of the Meadow operation was taken up by Penny Chenery, daughter of Christopher Chenery.

### **His Name**

The name “Secretariat” came from a suggestion made by Mr. Chenery’s long-time secretary, Elizabeth Ham, who had earlier worked for diplomat Norman Davis. Ms. Ham worked for Mr. Davis when he served at the League of Nation’s secretariat. The name was accepted by the Chenery’s and the newly foaled horse became Secretariat.

### **The Horse**

Secretariat, by his third year, had grown to a powerful 16.2 hands tall weighing 1,200 pounds. Even great horses like Secretariat require the best care and training to become Triple

Crown Champions, and Meadow Farm was staffed by skilled and dedicated people who made Secretariat a winner. Penny Chenery Tweedy owned the farm and directed operations. Veteran trainer Lucien Laurin developed the program that transformed the horse into a racing great. Jockey Ron Turcotte rode Secretariat with sensitivity, strength, and skill. Eddie Sweat was the groom that looked after Secretariat's daily needs. Jim Gaffney and Charlie Davis were Secretariat's exercise riders. It was Jim Gaffney that nicknamed Secretariat "Big Red." Both Jim Gaffney and Ron Turcotte have returned to Caroline over the last few years to help celebrate Secretariat's birth and racing successes at a number of public events.



## Career

Secretariat's career was unmatched. His list of successes tells the story:

- Unanimously voted Horse of the Year as a two-year-old in 1972. Secretariat was the first juvenile so honored.
  - In 1973, Secretariat was the first horse to win the Triple Crown in 25 years.
  - Secretariat broke the track records in all three races: The Kentucky Derby, 1:59 2/5; The Preakness, though the official track clock was broken, 1:53 2/3; and The Belmont Stakes, 2:24 and by an astounding 31 lengths.
- Secretariat was voted America's Horse of the Year again in 1973.
  - Both *ESPN* and *Sports Illustrated* rated Secretariat as one of the greatest athletes of the century.
  - Secretariat ran 21 races, won 16, placed 3, and showed 1.

Secretariat was a highly successful breeding stallion especially in siring many daughters who continue his blood line in the sport today. Secretariat also sired many stakes winners including Lady's Secret, Weekend Surprise, Bluebook, Risen Star, and many others.

## Retirement

Secretariat succumbed to a hoof illness in 1989 while in retirement in Kentucky.

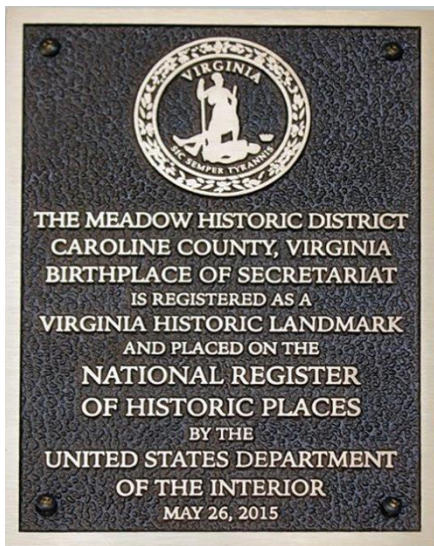
The standard of excellence in thoroughbred racing has been set by Secretariat. There have been few Triple Crown winners since 1973 when Secretariat established the track records, and Secretariat's records remain intact. Recent Triple Crown races have featured excellent horses that have fallen short of winning all three races. The rarity of winning a Triple Crown and the high physical price sometimes paid by a fine horse striving to win the progressively longer races make plain the great achievement of Secretariat.

## Honors

Caroline County honors Secretariat and has in recent years attempted to celebrate his life and achievements.

Caroline has hosted celebrations with honored guests from Secretariat's career. Ms. Penny Chenery has been gracious and generous with her time to visit and celebrate in Caroline. As well, Ron Turcotte and Jim Gaffney have become good friends of the County and staff through their visits. Meadow Farm staff have been hosted by the State Fair and the Caroline Visitor Center.

In 2003, the Caroline County Board of Supervisors enlisted the help of Bill Nack to draft a resolution honoring Secretariat's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of winning the Triple Crown. The resolution was offered to the Commonwealth of Virginia General Assembly to give all of the Old Dominion the opportunity to celebrate thoroughbred racing's greatest champion, a Virginia horse, Secretariat.



## Meadow Farm

Meadow Farm, Secretariat's birthplace, has been preserved from residential development through the purchase of the property by the State Fair of Virginia (Atlantic Rural Exposition). Now known as The Meadow Event Park, the land will be kept intact and dedicated to the Commonwealth's Agricultural Fair with an expanded equestrian component. The Historic District was added to the National Register in 2015.

"Secretariat", starring Diane Lane and John Malkovich, with a cameo appearance by Penny Chenery Tweedy, is a heartwarming story about the horse, the family, and the farm. Released by Disney in 2010, this movie captures the surprising story of this remarkable owner and horse! <http://movies.disney.com/secretariat>

## More Information

More information and events can be found at <http://www.visitcaroline.com/>

Gary R. Wilson  
Director, Caroline County Department of  
Economic Development & Tourism



# Highlights from the January 2024 CHS Meeting



At the January 2024 meeting of the Caroline Historical Society, Jacob Martin presented a wonderful presentation on “Life after the establishment of A.P. Hill.” Jacob is a student at the University of Mary Washington and decided to write his thesis on the effect the establishment of A.P. Hill had on the people of Caroline County. Jacob has always had a strong interest in local history and his ancestors have lived in Caroline County for generations.

Jacob’s thesis discussed how life was affected within Caroline County following the Great Depression and leading up to the United States’ involvement in World War 2. The creation of the military base forced

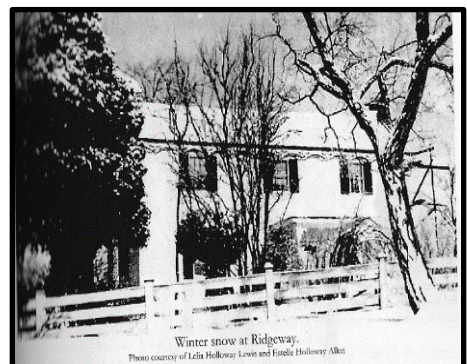
hundreds of people to lose their homes and land. One third of the total acres in Caroline County, approximately 76,000 acres, would be taken for military purposes. Many residents

were able to find other parcels of land or homes

to move into in the county, but a lot were forced to find property in adjoining counties. Many properties had been owned by families for generations. The government compensated the property owners for their property, but the move was felt the hardest by the tenant

farmers who received no compensation since they owned no land and had to find a new home and employment.

Businesses, churches, and schools were also affected by the establishment of the military base. Many schools were forced to consolidate into existing schools already in the County.



## Businesses . . .

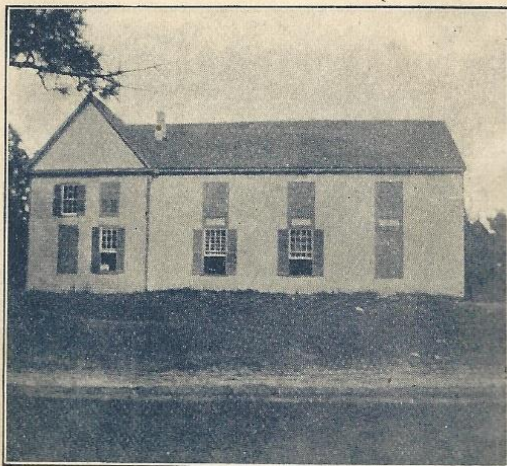
Two of the many businesses taken as part of the creation of the military base were Baynham and Rockie Wright's store (pictured to right) and A. W. Baylor's Store. Both stores were located at Upper Zion.



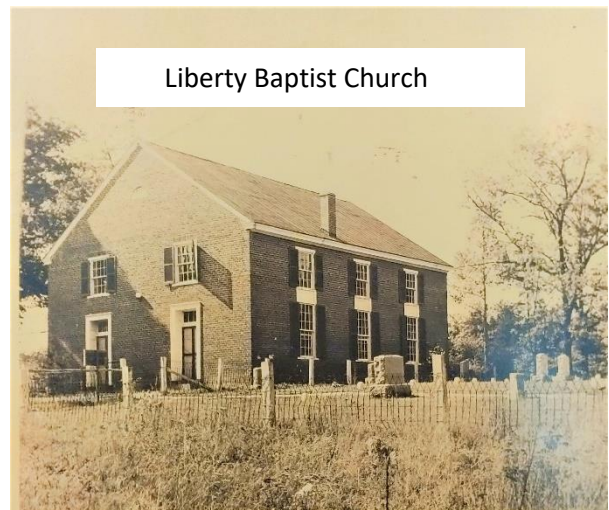
Bethesda Baptist Church

## Churches . . .

Several churches to include Bethlehem Baptist, Bethesda Baptist, Liberty Baptist, Mount Olive Baptist, Saint Paul's Baptist, Union Baptist, and Zoar Baptist were forced to close. The only church retained by the base was Liberty Baptist Church which is used today as the post chapel.



UPPER ZION BAPTIST CHURCH.



Liberty Baptist Church

# Once Enslaved, a Caroline Man Creates a Mega-Church

By Ed Simmons, Jr.



An African-American hero previously unsung in Caroline County is The Rev. Samuel K. Taylor.

Born a slave in the vicinity of Port Royal in 1836, he would flee the plantation during the height of the Civil War and found Bethlehem Baptist Church in the Gum Springs area of Alexandria, Virginia.

Today, at the corner of Fordson Road and Sherwood Hall Lane, Bethlehem Baptist Church is a 900-seat megachurch.

Rev. Taylor was born on Hazelwood Plantation in upper northeastern Caroline on the south bank of the Rappahannock River at Hicks Landing across from Goats Island. His parents were John and Agnes Taylor.

Hazelwood, circa 1750, was founded by U.S. Senator John Taylor, a contemporary and friend of Thomas Jefferson. The senator died in 1824, and the house burned in the Civil War, year unknown. It has not been rebuilt.

Before the Civil War, the enslaved young Samuel Taylor at age 17, around 1853, had a religious conversion and joined his master's church. Soon after he envisioned a future of going out into the world and preaching.

He began as a plantation pastor ministering to his fellow enslaved, and so he remained until the second year of the Civil War. Now in 1863 and aged 27, perhaps in the aftermath of the burning of the house, Taylor left the plantation and headed north.

The landscape he would travel was war torn and the roads dangerous and chaotic.

But a man of courage and faith, he had a vision.

Scores of miles north, he arrived in the Gum Springs area of Alexandria, Virginia. This was a Black enclave of 178 acres that was owned by West Ford, a freed slave related to the Washington family. Many free Black families settled there.

Here Rev. Taylor began the second phase of this ministry, holding services in different families' homes.

The first church building, constructed in 1867, was made of lumber salvaged from U.S. cavalry stables. This doubled as a church and school.



First Church 1867

Rev. Taylor was assisted by The Rev. Samuel Madden, pastor of the First Colored Baptist Church, later known as Alfred Street Baptist, nearby in Alexandria.

Rev. Madden performed baptism and communion until Rev. Taylor was officially ordained in 1882.



Second Church 1884

Once a slave on a Caroline plantation, The Rev. Samuel K. Taylor died an honored pastor and founder of the magnificent Bethlehem Baptist Church.

Pictured to the right is Bethlehem Baptist Church today.

The second church building, a picturesque Victorian-style country chapel, was raised in 1884.

Rev. Taylor continued to serve until an unfortunate occurrence in 1912. It was the last Sunday of October, probably chilly, and he was conducting baptisms in nearby Hunting Creek. Afterwards, not immediately changing to dry clothes, he took sick and died the next day. He was 76.



## Caroline History Quiz

The October Quiz is brought to you by Caroline Historical Society's Historian Bernard Collins to share interesting facts about Caroline County history. Bernard's book "Caroline County Virginia History, Facts and More" contains many interesting facts about Caroline County.

### April's Questions:

1. Who wrote and published three books, on Port Royal, Bowling Green, and "People, Post Offices and Communities in Caroline County"?
2. Was a general in the Revolutionary War who was captured and died in New York?
3. Who served as Curator of the Smithsonian Museum and published many books on Caroline?

## Answers:

1. Ralph Fall wrote the three books while rector of the Episcopal Churches in Port Royal and Bowling Green from 1962 until 1982. We are fortunate to have many Caroline history books. Marshall Wingfield, minister of Christian churches in Bowling Green and Penola wrote "The History of Caroline County, Virginia" in 1924. Elliot Campbell wrote "Colonial Caroline" in 1954. Mary Tod Haley published "Caroline County, A Pictorial History" in 1985. Herbert Collins published many books on cemeteries, death records, vital statistics, etc. and a significant book: "Caroline County Virginia ESTATES Residences and Historic Sites" (PICTURES). Marion Woodfork Simmons wrote "Memories of Union High" in 2011. Bernard Collins wrote "Caroline County Virginia History, Facts and More", Volume One and Two. There are also books on important people from Caroline including Edmund Pendleton, John Taylor, Gen. William Woodford, etc.

2. The general was Brig. Gen. William Woodford. His father, Maj. William Woodford from England was a highly a highly respected gentleman who lived at his plantation, Windsor, near the Rappahannock River. The plantation home was in Fort A.P. Hill and no longer stands. Young Col. William Woodford served in command of the Second Regiment under George Washington in the French and Indian War. Col. Patrick Henry was in command of the First Regiment and Col. Hugh Mercer was in command of the Third Regiment. During the Revolutionary War, Edmund Pendleton on the Committee of Safety selected William Woodford to command the Virginia Forces. General Woodford achieved success in the Norfolk area, but he was captured at the Siege of Charleston and died as a POW in New York. General Woodford's home was in Woodford. Woodford post office, train station, and community honor his name.

3. Herbert Collins was a curator at the Smithsonian Institution. Herbert's many life achievements and picture were fully covered in the last Caroline Historical Society Newsletter. I will not repeat them here. One **tidbit**: During the military draft in the 1950s, a general reviewed a young man's record who was a college graduate, who could type, and who had exhibited his writing skills as the author of two books. This young, enlisted man, Herbert, came to the general's office in the Pentagon. Herbert lived up to the general's expectations. The Pentagon and Smithsonian are close, and the general paved Herbert's way to the Smithsonian.

### Membership Dues Reminder for 2024

If you have not paid your 2024 dues, please forward payment to:

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Caroline Historical Society  | Individual membership – \$15.00 per year |
| P.O. Box 324                 | Family membership – \$20.00 per year     |
| Bowling Green, VA 22427-0324 | Life membership – \$200 for life         |

### General Contact Information

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