Bedford Museum and Genealogical Library

Fall 2019 Issue, A Semi-Annual Publication

Living Liberty Returns

Quotes from the Two Presidents during the Civil War:

“That some achieve great success, is proof to all that others can achieve it as well.” -Abraham Lincoln

“Truthfulness is a cornerstone in character, and if it be not firmly laid in youth, there will ever after be a weak spot in the foundation.” -Jefferson Davis

Photo taken by Eddie Harris

Amber Catherine Photography
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TRAIN EXHIBIT
RETURNS

*BLACK FRIDAY through FIRST SATURDAY in January*

- Interactive Thomas the Tank Engine track
- See BEDFORD on the layout, local businesses and public buildings
- “The Polar Express” during the two weeks of Christmas break
- Large groups: please call for an appointment
- $5 admission for adults, kids are free
- Closed major holidays and extreme weather
- Collecting New and Gently loved stuffed animals for the Teddy Bear Brigade for Gleaning for the World

Bedford Museum & Genealogical Library
201 E. Main St.
Bedford, VA
540-586-4520
www.bedfordvamuseum.org

Hours:
Mon-Sat 10-5
Till 8pm first 3 Fridays in Dec.
Visitors Near and Far

We get over 3,000 visitors every year. At our front door we have a sign in sheet for our visitors to sign on arrival. I thought it would be neat to give a little shout out to our visitors and the places they travelled from to visit us here in Bedford, VA. So the next time you come for a visit make sure to sign our guest book and you might be featured in our next newsletter.

Thank you for visiting:

Alan & Phyllis Daughtry from Dunn, North Carolina
Paul Newman from Columbus, Ohio
Wenny & Eileen Wawayo from Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Barry & Machi Branham from Ashville, Alabama
Samuel Ham from Melville, Louisiana
Kathy Karinck from Grafton, Wisconsin
Jerry & Kelly Stewart from Hurst, Texas
Donna Miller from Shawnee, Kansas
Chuck & Allison Houchin from Stony Point, North Carolina
Patrick & William Saville from Hickman, Nebraska
Lillie Pringle from Georgetown, Texas
Cindy Eccles from Kingston, Ontario, Canada
Phil Hoddinott from Kingston, Ontario, Canada
Connie & Randy Bishop from Chapel Hill, North Carolina
Rae & Park Samson from San Diego, California
William & Patti Ross from Bonita Springs, Florida
Chris Lamoureux from Utah
Cathy Luck & Mike Roth from Bella Vista, Arkansas
Vincent Panissidi from Florida
Avis & Greg from North Las Vegas
David & Ed Cherry from Maryville, Tennessee
Laura Cook from Berea, Ohio
Kevan Wathen from Leonardtown, Maryland
Jan & John Blakely from Weaverville, North Carolina
Olive Malter from Marshall, Maryland
Lawrence & Dorothy Belmont from Boones, WV
Mark & Kathryn Christensen from East Lyme, Connecticut

Compliments

Jennifer Thomson,

You quickly found the census information I had. Then, you came up with two birth record books for me to review. That was followed with another book. Lastly, there was the two volume archive of information of African Americans in the Bedford area. My wife was particularly amazed by that find and impressed by the amount of work that had to go into making those volumes. You even shared a bit of your personal genealogy before we left. I do know that they allowed us to meet you. Our encounter just added to a wonderful weekend. Thank you for all that you did with your knowledge and your spirit. – Fred Watts

Sources provided. Classes done very well. – Genealogy Student

Thank you! So happy you provide this class. – Genealogy Student

Good info. Knowledgeable instructor. – Genealogy Student

Enjoyed the class-Thanks! - Genealogy Student

Thank you for maintaining your large Leftwich library, and having staff that can direct us to Leftwich cemeteries and houses. - SK

Though a bit overwhelming, I feel I have more than enough info to get started. Thank you! - Cent & Mary

Dear Bedford Museum & Genealogical Library,

We would like to thank you for your hospitality you provided during the Living Liberty Returns weekend. You made our stay in Bedford very memorable. Please keep us in mind for any future events. - Lee’s Lieutenants

Thank you so much for the recent genealogy class my husband and I took. Learning from Jennifer and Grace is a wonderful experience and an amazing resource offered in Bedford County. We also appreciate the gift of the free membership. I hope to get my act together enough in the future that I can ask for assistance on my brick walls. – Debbie & Gary Hammond

It is a great resource to anyone about our history and ancestors. It has so many resources and workshops that also help anyone interested in their family or the area. – Kris Helms

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ATTENTION!

Groupon Membership: if you purchase a membership to the Museum through Groupon, please call us with the confirmation number. Groupon does not give us any information on the individual who made the purchase, so we have no way of thanking you or giving you the correct credentials for the website and membership. Thank you!

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Genealogy Classes

As many of you know the museum teaches a beginners genealogy class every month. We are pleased to announce in addition to our beginners course we have added an advanced Ancestry class and an Ancestry DNA course.

Recently we changed our schedule for our monthly classes. Every first and second Saturday, unless otherwise noted, classes will begin at 9:30-12:00. The advanced classes will run from 1:00-3:00 on those same Saturdays.

We only accept the first ten that sign up due to limited space in our library. To sign up for our beginner courses or our advance courses please call us at 540-586-4520.

Night at The Museum

In collaboration with the 2nd Fridays program in downtown Bedford, the Museum hosted a Night at The Museum. Flashlight guided tours led participants through the museum to see what exhibits come to life when the lights go out in the Museum.

Five exhibits came to life and told the tales of days gone by. Dan Villarial was stationed in the Co. A Room where Villarial spoke about his service in World War II and Korea as well as his time as a Washington D.C. Police Officer.

Frank "Butch" Mills owned his own cab company, Frank J. Mills Cab Service in Bedford, Virginia. Mills spoke about his experiences as a business owner in Bedford.

As the tour continued Bedford’s Police Chief, Mason Preas, prevented the old Moonshine Still from starting up again and shared with participants of his time on the force in the 1950’s and 1960’s.

As the tour made their way to the third floor they were greeted by Senator William R. Terry. Terry stumped for his upcoming election and reminisced on his service in the War Between the States.

Mary Oney Fizer ended the tour as she talked of her time as a nurse on the home front in Bedford during the Civil War. She nursed the sick and wounded at the Campbell Hospital located on North Bridge Street.

Donations Received

Below is a recent donation of Snow/Snoe family history. The collection includes dozens of old photographs that paint such a neat picture of a time gone by. We have included two of the many pictures donated. The pictures below are unidentified. These are beautiful pauses in time and we are grateful to add this family information to our collection.
Women’s History Month Writing Contest
Grades 2-8
Sponsored by:
The Bedford Museum and Genealogical Library
Two Grand Prizes, Grades 2-5 & Grades 6-8 $50.00
Plus First Place and Runner Up in the following categories:
- Grades 2-3
- Grades 4-5
- Grades 6-8

The first place winner will win $25.00 and the Runner Up will receive $15.00.
Home school and private school students welcome.

In 1620, the Pilgrims came to the new world for religious freedom. In 1720, the Queen of Sweden gave up her joint reign to allow her husband to reign as king. In 1820, Susan B. Anthony was born, who would lead the charge for women’s right to vote which finally came to be in 1920, with the passing of the 19th Amendment. In honor of these events, please tell us about a woman you admire who fought for rights and equality. In one to two pages, with at least one source for 2-5th grade, and two sources for 6-8th grade, please tell why you admire her, and how you want to be like her. Please say exactly where you found the information: name of book, name of website, etc. there is no particular format for the sources as long as they are there. Extra points are available for first hand accounts and local (within 60 miles of the boarder of Bedford) women.

Winners will be invited to read their essays at a special reception Saturday, March 21, at 2:00 PM at the Museum. The winners will also be submitted to the Bedford Bulletin, placed on our Facebook page, and in our semi-annual newsletter. All entries must be in the Museum by:

Friday, February 28 @ 5:00PM.
Questions: please call 540-586-4520, email: librarian@bedfordvmuseum.org or stop by the Museum at 201 E. Main St. in Centertown Bedford.

For each entry, please attach the following information sheet:
Title of Entry ____________________________________________________________
Name & Grade of Author _________________________________________________
Mailing Address _________________________________________________________
Home Telephone ________________________________
Teacher ___________________________________________
School __________________________________________

Signed Parent Permission: I _____________________________ (Parent’s Name), provide permission for my child ____________________________ (Child’s Name) to enter the Women’s History Contest sponsored by the Bedford Museum and Genealogical Library. I also grant my permission for my child’s entry to be published in the Bedford Bulletin Newspaper upon its submission by the Museum, as well as the Museum’s semi-annual newsletter, and my child’s name & photo to the Museum’s Facebook page. I also understand my child’s essay will be the property of the Bedford Museum.
On another week, the children enjoyed meeting the different departments that run the Bedford County School System. The trip to Public Works allowed the children to climb on the equipment used to keep the streets clean and vegetation taken care of.

On another week, the children enjoyed meeting the different departments that run the Bedford County School System. The trip to Public Works allowed the children to climb on the equipment used to keep the streets clean and vegetation taken care of.

The summer ended with a trip to the Parks and Recreation Department and a party at Falling Creek Park.

The children were also offered a 'Passport' where they could do different activities associated with the week’s event and received points for the end of the year party. We didn't do an activity during the 4th of July weekend or the weekend of the 75th Anniversary of D-Day, but earned points that week for patriotic activities and participating in the D-Day festivities.

The program would not have been possible without the great support of our wonderful sponsors, the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks Lodge #2844 and the Bedford Main St. Organization.

Thank you to both the town and county government agencies that let us tour their facilities and learn what they do to help Bedford (Town and County) be a great place to live.

Be sure to be on the look out in the May issue for more details on next summers program. We are already thinking about next year and what we can do to make it an amazing time learning about Bedford County’s history.

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Doug Cooper Retires as Director of the Bedford Museum

By: Grace Peterson

After years of dedicated work as the Director of the Museum, Doug has made the decision to retire. While his retirement has left the museum quieter on Tuesdays and Thursdays Doug is now serving as a Board Member, where he will continue to be an integral facet of the Museum.

Many of you may know that Doug has been Director of the Museum for the better part of 15 years after first working as a volunteer. Doug has always said he took this job as a temporary position after being asked by the board. He agreed to manage the museum until they found someone for the job. Following up with “I’ve been here 15 years so they’re either still looking for someone or they found him.” I would always chuckle when hearing this but I now see this statement through different lenses. The Board really did find the person for the job. Doug was just what the museum needed at the time.

The Museum needed a fierce advocate and it was found in the character of Doug. He has always wanted nothing but the best for the museum and worked his hardest to ensure the longevity of Bedford’s only County Museum. Under Doug’s leadership the museum has expanded and moved further into the future. Building renovations, restoration projects, exhibit updates, scanning projects, and a website are just a small percentage of the work that has been accomplished over the years.

Thank you to Doug and his wife Sue for your selfless dedication to the success of the Museum and your continued support. The Museum would not be where it is now if not for your hard work and foresight.

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Below is a neat article by an unknown author and source. Typed as written.

Man of Mystery

W. T. “Buck” Wright

Residents of the upper Goose Creek Valley told of a character who lived in a cabin near the top of the Blue Ridge on the Bedford County side. This man of mystery was W. T. “Buck” Wright. The men told of Buck’s farming and bringing to the Arrington’s cannery a large wooden box of tomatoes which he held in front of him on the saddle or on his shoulder. He rode a donkey which had been given to him by the Dillon family of Indian Rock. His dog “Tippy” followed him on his rides. He had come to the mountain from Buchanan and he had come to Botetourt County (accord to Mr. Hugh Swartz) from Tennessee as Wright claimed. He was held in awe because he was thought to have been a member of the Jesse James gang. Many rumors were circulated as to his real name and from where he came. It was reputed that he had told someone that his name was really Younger (the Younger brothers were members of the James gang). At one time Wright was ill of pneumonia and rheumatism. The doctor who attended him told that his body contained scars of knife wounds. He had a fairly good education and was intelligent, well read and posted on affairs in general. A good conversationalist, one who noticed his features would be impressed by his keen and alert eyes. A man of great physical strength, Wright, at age 70, often walked to Buchanan and back (12 miles) in a day. He was a crack shot and talked of serving from Tennessee in the War Between the States. He wore a Masonic emblem and said that he had been a Freemason.

As far as was known “Buck” Wright never told about his former life except to relate how as a sharpshooter he would “pick off” a Union soldier and had many desperate fights. He worked as a day laborer, farmed a little for himself and made some whiskey. He was tall, of a large frame, had a long white beard and hair and continued to walk despite his rheumatism. He had told friends that he expected to write a book of his life to be published after his death.

Wright died at the age of 92. He had been visiting his son and
daughter and became ill at Lowry (Bedford County) where he died.

The Montvale residents who had known “Buck” said little of his family although they assumed that members helped him in growing tomatoes and the grain which he carried on his donkey to a mill in Buchanan.

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West Cork, Ireland

By Amy Martin Wilson

In the 1840s and 50s, many thousands of Irish immigrants arrived in the United States. They were fleeing the potato famine, where hunger and disease had claimed the lives of so many who had relied on the potato crop for sustenance. Most historians estimate at least one million people died of hunger during those famine years and at least one million more emigrated to the United States, Canada, Australia etc. Many came here to build railroad tracks, tunnels, canals, etc.

One such Irishman who left Ireland was my great-grandfather, Thomas Corcoran, a young man in his 20s.

I first find Thomas Cockran listed as a white male over 16 years of age, on Page 7, 1850B Tax list, Bedford County, VA, dated May 16, 1850.

He had to be assessed, even though he had no personal property and paid no tax that day. It is sad to think he owned nothing of value, not even a pocket watch, as even watches were taxed in many areas.

In order to trace my family’s origins back to Ireland, on June 9, 2013, I met with Mr. Christy Keating, a professional genealogist at Cobh Heritage Center, Queenstown, in County Cork, Ireland, in search of my Irish ancestors who lived in Ireland in the 19th century. All the information we had was that my great-grandfather, Thomas Cochran (note the family spelling) had emigrated along with a brother to the United States from County Cork, Ireland prior to 1850, during the potato famine, because the family was starving.

Mr. Keating stated unequivocally that if Thomas was Irish and a catholic and from County Cork as we had learned from family legends, the correct last name would be CORCORAN which is Gaelic, whereas Cochran is English. What an eye opener! Thank you, Christy.

The second spelling of his name was found on the 1850 Bedford County census dated July 26, 1850, where the spelling is Corkran. A lot closer to Corcoran!

From that day forward, all records spell the name as Cochran, and the entire family went by that name from then until the present. I am very grateful to Mr. Keating for setting the record straight regarding my ancestors. I now know I am third generation Irish, and a Corcoran, not a Cochran. However, all the phonetic variations are understandable due to spelling and pronunciation. As I am able to prove the lineage, I am entitled to use the family Coat-of-Arms according to Mr. Keating.

On a ship’s manifest, Mr. Keating found two men named Corcoran whom he firmly believes to be my ancestor, Thomas, and a younger brother Jerry. The ship Afghan left Liverpool, stopped in Queenstown for passengers and landed in New York at the docks on East River in April, 1850. Family lore was that they came through Ellis Island in New York, but we know with absolute certainty this is incorrect as Ellis Island was not in operation as an immigration center until the 1890s. This further validates the Afghan supposition.

There are still many unanswered questions. One is how did Thomas get from West Cork to Queenstown and how did he get from New York to Bedford once he came ashore?

By July 26, 1850 he is found working on the railroad near Forest, Virginia along with nearly one hundred other Irish laborers. Why did Thomas decide to remain in Bedford while the railroad was making progress toward Bristol and points West? Had he somehow met and fallen in love with the lovely Louisa Hammond? We know there were Hammonds taxed in Bedford as early as 1844. He married Louisa in January, 1854.

More unanswered questions. What are the names of Thomas’s parents? In 2018 Mr. Keating found some promising information. Based on very strong traditional naming customs in Ireland, his father’s name was almost certainly Thomas. We find one Thomas Corcoran marrying Mary Ahern in Cork in 1820, but we have no proof whether this couple could actually be my great-great grandparents, but we firmly believe we have found the right family.

And more unanswered questions. What became of Thomas’s family in Cork, Ireland? Did they die during The Great Hunger? Are they buried in the mass graves found in West Cork? When I visited Ireland in 2018, I saw two “famine” graveyards and could not help but wonder if my ancestors were buried there. There are no gravestones with names. It was all the weak and hungry people could do to prepare mass burial sites for their kin.

At the Skibbereen Heritage Center in West Cork, they have information on three mass Famine graves, where up to 10,000 people are buried. Skibbereen was one of the worst hit areas during the famine.

There have been many causes attributed to the famine, not the least of which involved politics of the day! The government provided some Poor Houses which were over-crowded and disease ridden, adding to the problem. There were a few work programs for some of the able-bodied, and I was told there still exist “roads to nowhere” built during that time to give some people employment. There were a few work programs for some of the able-bodied, and I was told there still exist “roads to nowhere” built during that time to give some people...
employment. I believe Thomas was one of the men hired at that time, as after he was established in Bedford, he was awarded a contract to build a road over “Otey Mountain.”

Poor Irish farmers who could not pay their rent to absentee landlords, due to crop failure, were evicted from their homes by the authorities. Men, women and children were forcibly removed, and the homes set on fire to prevent squatters.

Though weakened from hunger, many found their way to the coast to try to obtain passage out of the country. How did they manage to get from West Cork to the Queenstown port, a distance of about 40 miles?

In carts!

Taking turns, they would ride or pull, stopping at barns along the way at night. A few, like Thomas Corcoran and his brother, were lucky. They managed to get passage. I would like to believe the brothers were strong enough and able to help the others.

It is no small wonder I feel such a strong spiritual connection to Ireland.

At the Skibbereen Heritage Center, there is a memorial on display:

IN MEMORY OF THE FAMINE 1845-48
WHOSE COFFINLESS BODIES WERE
BURIED IN THIS PLACE.

Thomas died at his home at Bedford Springs (now known as New London) in 1889 and is buried on the 84-acre farm he purchased with his hard-earned money in 1855, knowing full well that land equaled wealth and power, a lesson learned in his youth in Ireland.

Ever true to his Irish roots, after establishing his residence and raising a large family in Bedford County, Virginia, Thomas was a hard worker who would stop off on his way home after work for a drink. His granddaughter told me this story. When he got home, he would tell Louisa to “Get me off me damn horse.” If she said she couldn’t, he would say “Take me by my hair and pull me off me damn horse.”

True to my Irish heritage, I raise a glass to my IRISH Corcoran ancestors. Although I never knew them, I still carry the bloodline. My ashes will be scattered in the family cemetery.

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Belmont Seminary

The following article was featured in our Spring 1988 Newsletter and we thought it would be fun to bring it back out! Article is typed as written.

In the late 1890’s, the Presbyterian Church of Bedford founded a school for girls called Belmont Seminary. They purchased the residence and spacious grounds from Dr. John W. Sale, Dr. Sale’s home is now the present home of Mrs. J. W. Hayes, called Kingston. They erected a brick building as close to Dr. Sale’s white frame house as possible.

The school opened in September, 1890, although the building was not completed.

Professor James R. Guy, past principal of the local public school for eighteen years, was made principal of the Seminary.

Professor Guy and his family lived in Dr. Sale’s former home. The living room was the office and the other three rooms were used as dining rooms for the students. They Guy Family lived upstairs.

The front porch baluster on the side of the house, next to the school, was removed and a board walk ran from the porch to the steps that led down from Belmont. This enabled the faculty and girls cover when going to their meals on rainy days.

The faculty was composed entirely of members of the local Presbyterian Church with the exception of the voice teacher. They were, Dr. and Mrs. Wade and family, Mrs. Was the Matron, Miss Florence, assistant principal. Miss Willie taught kindergarten and Miss Hallie, art.

Miss Junia Graves taught mathematics and the sciences. Professor Frederick von Roy was head of the music department and Miss Augusta Graves and Miss Ida Wade his assistants. The school existed only eight years. The present brick building on Longwood Avenue now occupies the site of the former Belmont Seminary.
A Tragedy at Liberty

The article below is from the Conservative Democrat in Marion, Virginia. The story ran on Thursday, May 21, 1885. The article is typed as written.

A most distressing tragedy is reported to have occurred yesterday morning at Liberty, the particulars of which, as nearly as they could be ascertained, are as follows: It seems that some time ago Mr. Hairston Terry, a son of General William R. Terry, superintendent of the State prison, made Mr. T.A. Jeter, of Liberty, a present of a setter dog, and Jeter out of the best motive in the world, named the animal for a member of young Terry's household. Yesterday, while under the influence of brandy, Terry happened in at People's Warehouse, of which Jeter was one of the proprietors, and was asked by Jeter as to the health of his father, General Terry, who had been reported to be critically ill in Richmond. The young man responded in a melancholy way that his father could ?, but would die; whereupon Jeter, in order, perhaps, to cheer young Terry up, began to joke with, and in a perfectly friendly spirit inquired: “Why don't you come up to see your relation?” - meaning, it is presumed, the dog, which was named after Terry's sister. This appeared to incense Terry, who, without further provocation, it is alleged, and without demanding explanation or apology, drew a pistol and fired two shots rapidly at Jeter, both of which took effect in the abdomen about one inch and half a part, Jeter staggered and fell, and died from the effects of his wounds within less time than half an hour.

Terry was at once arrested and placed in jail. When asked what induced him to shoot Jeter the only provocation alleged was the fact of the latter having named his dog after Miss Terry. Young Terry was on a visit to his sister, Mrs. E.T. Walker. The news of the killing soon spread through the town and created the intensest excitement, as Jeter was one of the best known and most popular citizens of all Bedford county. He is represented to have been a gentleman in every sense of the term, and a man of pleasing and engaging demeanor. At last report the excitement engendered by the shooting had not subsided and many threats of lynching were being made. Terry's friends claim, with some show of reason, that the young man was insane, and it is surely a fact that Dr. Hunter McGuire, on of the most eminent physicians in the State has been frequently consulted about Terry's mental condition and had treated him for insanity. It is also said that Drs. Jones and Bowyer has also treated him. On the contrary others assert that the whole tragedy is resultant from Terry's intoxication, and manifest little patience with the defense made of young man.

The whole affair is peculiarly unfortunate and distressing. General Terry, the young man's father, is critically ill at Richmond. As soon as Jeter was killed Mrs. Terry was telegraphed for and went to Liberty, where she had a very affecting interview with her son in prison. She had not been there many hours before she was summoned by the announcement that her husband was worse, and in less than two hours after her departure from Liberty her son was taken from jail and lynched. Hairston Terry was about twenty-three years old, and is represented to have been quiet, reserved, and theretofore, an offensive person. He was employed some time ago as a clerk in the establishment of Messrs. Lee, Taylor & Snead, this city. Jeter was about forty-five years of age and leaves three orphaned children.

Staunton Spectator newspaper clipping from June 10, 1885, talks about the mob responsible for lynching Hairston Terry.

Staunton Spectator newspaper clipping from June 10, 1885, talks about the mob responsible for lynching Hairston Terry

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The Following is a letter from the War Department to Mrs. Alice Powers on August 1, 1944. The letter is to inform her that her son Jack Powers was killed after he was reported missing on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Alex Kershaw included this letter in his book The Bedford Boys.

Mrs. Alice P. Powers  
1020 Madison Street  
Bedford, Virginia

Dear Mrs. Powers:

It is with profound regret that I confirm the recent telegram informing you of the death of your son, Private First Class Jack G. Powers, 20, 363, 657, Infantry, who was previously reported missing in action on 6 June 1944 in France.

An official message has now been received which states that he was killed in action on the date he was previously reported missing in action. If additional information is received it will be transmitted to you promptly.

I realize the burden of anxiety that has been yours since he was first reported missing in action and deeply regret the sorrow this later report brings you. May the knowledge that he made the supreme sacrifice for his home and country be a source of sustaining comfort.

My sympathy is with you in this time of great sorrow.

Sincerely yours,

J.A. Ullo  
Major General,  
The Adjutant General.

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Old Places, Old Faces:  
Collection at the Bedford Museum  
The Bedford Museum & Genealogical Library houses the files of a collection of Old Places, Old Faces articles done by The Bedford Bulletin. In the next several newsletters we will feature an article from the Old Places, Old Faces file in hopes of identifying the people in the photos.

The late Dr. E.L. Johnson, pictured at a hale and hearty age of 78 in a 1957 Lynchburg News photograph; attributed his health and longevity to a daily glass of buttermilk. Dr. Johnson practiced medicine in the Bedford area for many, many years, opening his office in the first decade of the 20th century. During his long career, Dr. Johnson delivered more than 6,000 babies. Until an illness put him in the hospital for a few days in 1955, Dr. Johnson had never been sick a day in his life, not even so much as a head cold. Eva Arthur of Big Island contributed this week’s photo.

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War Between the States Museum Grand Opening  
By: Grace Peterson

Over the last several years we have highlighted the renovations and remodeling we have accomplished. The painting, new floors, rearranging, expanding and building have been documented and it is so exciting to finally show you the end results of the brand new War Between the States Museum. The third floor has completely transformed into an integral piece of the Museum as a whole.

Seventeen new display cases, two scenes, and countless artifacts on display for the first time.

Our Fall 2017 Newsletter captured the first display cases making their way to the third floor. One year later, All the Display cases were installed, painted, carpeted, lights installed and were ready to be filled. After trains went back to storage in January of 2019 we began the full time job of assembling the new exhibits to be ready for our Grand Opening in May 2019.

Leslie Mehaffey and I were able to pull together the room and have it ready for the grand opening and the eventful weekend planned to celebrate the new exhibits.

Stay tuned for future updates on additional rooms receiving updates and new exhibits being completed.
Living Liberty Returns:
Battlefield Reenactments
By: Noelle Woodcock

“Living Liberty Returns” took place over Memorial Day weekend, and it included the grand opening of the Bedford War Between the States Museum on the third floor of our Museum. Many people came out to see the uniformed men share their knowledge about what happened so long ago.

The surroundings of the event, including the makeshift tents, confederate soldiers, and women dressed in period clothing all brought together a feeling of being transported back to the American Civil War (1861-1865). The event was to remember those who died in the Civil War in Bedford and all over the United States. It also was to honor the brave men in all the other wars that have occurred in our Country’s history.
Make Believe I was There:
Letter to His Children Arrives After Soldier Dies in Action

Unknown Newspaper and Author, in Family Files in Museum

COLLINGDALE, Pa., Sept. 15 (AP) - A young soldier in Korea took a piece of notepaper from his helmet and wrote a letter to his two small daughters back home.

That letter was delivered yesterday to the home of six-year-old Rose Marie McCormick and her sister, Joan, three.

Three days ago, their mother was notified that Pfc. John J. McCormick, 28, paratrooper veteran of World War Two and infantryman in Korea, had been killed in action.

This is what Private McCormick wrote to ‘Dear Joannie and Rose Marie:

“This is Daddy. I want you to listen and pay attention while Mommie reads this to you. Just try and make believe I was there, talking to you.

“Joannie, I don’t think you’ll remember me because you were a little baby when I had to go away, but I used to sit and hold you a lot, when you were a bad little girl, I used to make you sit in a chair until you were good, but I always loved you a lot and I was very proud of you.

“Rose Marie, you should remember me because I used to take you out with me a lot, and I used to buy a lot of candy and sodas, and I used to feel so good when people used to say you had eyes like mine. Remember the little puppy I bought you? Your mummy used to tie a little pink ribbon around its neck and you used to carry it in your arms. You looked awfully cute.

“I want you both to know that I’d be with you if I could, but there are a lot of bad men in the world, and if they were allowed to do what they wanted to do, little girls like you wouldn’t be allowed to go to church on Sunday or be able to go to the school you wanted to.

“So I have to help fight these men and keep them from coming where you and mummie live. It might take a long while, and maybe Daddy will have to go and help God up in heaven, and if I do, I always want you both to be good for mummie, because she is the best mummie in the whole wide world.

“She has always taken care of you while I have been away. You see kids, I happened to be caught in two wars inside 10 years, and the reason I am where I am today is because I am fighting for what I think is right.

“That’s one thing I always want both of you to remember. If your conscience tells you something is right, always stand up for it. You might be ridiculed for doing so, but in the long run you’ll always find out that people respect you for doing so.

“When you grow up to be young ladies, don’t ever forget that mummie has done for you. She has often gone without clothes for herself so that both of you could have nice things. I want you to do as she says; go to church on Sundays and you can always pray for Daddy.

“So remember, kids, when you grow up, save this letter in came I’m not there to talk to you, and try and understand all I am saying, for its for your good, and because I love you and mummie so much. “I’ll be in a hole, fighting, in a few days, in a place called Korea. So I’m sending you all the love that’s in my heart on this sheet of paper. I carry your picture, and mummie’s next to my heart, and if I have to go to help God, you’ll know that the last thought I had on this earth was for the two of you and mommie. All my love and kisses. Be good and God bless you. Daddy.”

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Christmas at Chamblissburg

Unknown Newspaper and Author. Typed as written.

The home of Mrs. Eliza R. Wright, of Chamblissburg was the scene of a happy gathering in the afternoon of Christmas day, when Miss Pearl Wright, leader of the Sunbeam Band and teacher of the primary Sunday school class in the Baptist church, gave a Christmas tree for the benefit of her little scholars and friends. She was assisted by her sisters, Misses Abbie and Ola, in making the trees a thing of beauty. The children came, some thirty odd in all, and feasted their eyes on the tree while the pastor tried to talk to them, but he soon discovered that actions would speak more acceptably than words and governed himself accordingly. With the assistance of Rufus Foutz and M. F. Franklin each member of the class and band received a nice present, and all went away with faces indicating happy hearts. The appearance of the tree and the conduct of the children was highly creditable to all. Miss Wright has the best wishes of all good people in her efforts to develop the higher life of the children.

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The Bedford Boys:
How day on shores of France forever changed Virginia small town
By: Greg McQuade

This story appeared on CBS channel 6 news in Richmond, VA. It was posted on June 9, 2019. This article is typed as written.

BEDFORD, Va. — The beauty of Bedford, Virginia, is breathtaking in its natural splendor, but unseen is a lingering sadness. Marguerite Cottrell recalled the painful moment a stranger appeared carrying terrible news nearly 75 years ago. “I remember the day we got the message,” Cottrell said. “I knew something was wrong when this man delivered a letter.” The letter was a piece of paper that ravaged her family. “I said, ‘What was wrong?’ And she said, ‘Little Jack is gone,’” Cottrell said. “I said, ‘Gone?’ She said, ‘Jesus got my little boy now.’” Two years earlier, Cottrell’s older brother, Jack Reynolds, was ordered to Europe as World War II was raging. “Before he left, he came over and picked me up and said, ‘I want you to be a good little girl till I come home.’ That made my day,” Cottrell said. The 22-year-old soldier was part of Company A of the 1116th Infantry Regiment. “He looked big and handsome to me,” Cottrell remembered. “I guess that was the first person I’d ever seen in uniform was my brother.” The 116th was a highly-trained unit whose ranks were filled with young farm boys. Transatlantic letters kept the Reynolds connected and Mrs. Reynolds reassured. However, the soldiers would spearhead the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944. And in a matter of minutes Company A melted under withering fire from German defenders on Omaha Beach. Uncertainty and fear gripped the town. Five weeks later, a wave of pain from 4,000 miles away washed across Bedford. At Green’s Drugstore, Western Union telegrams revealed unbearable news. Nineteen Bedford Boys from Company A were dead or missing and another Bedford man in a different unit was also killed. It was the largest per-capita loss for one town in America. “It affected everybody,” Cottrell recalled. “Some kind of way it, I think, it affected everybody.” Historian and author Jim Morrison said Bedford was ill-prepared for the sudden shock and loss. “That was the worst of all of the beaches. The people didn’t find out about it right away,” Morrison said. “The impact of D-Day on such a small community with a National Guard unit and having 20 people killed is really poignant.” At the Reynolds home, Marguerite’s mother fell into a state of depression. Never fully recovering from losing her second son. “My mother till her dying day never quit talking about Jack,” Cottrell said. “She just felt like a part of her died when Jack died. That took a toll on her.” Mrs. Reynolds vowed to bring her little Jack home. “She said, ‘I’m not leaving my boy over there.’ She said, ‘France may take my boy away from me, but France is not keeping him,’” Cottrell said. Three years after the war’s end, Mrs. Reynolds’s would get her wish. Her son’s remains were returned to Virginia from France in 1947. Jack is resting at Greenwood Cemetery among several fellow Bedford Boys like Tech Sgt. Frank Draper, Capt. Taylor Fellers and Master Sgt. John Wilkes. “I would love to see my brother. The brother that I didn’t grow up with,” Cottrell said. Cottrell holds on tight to her big brother’s personal effects. “All of this belonged to my mother,” Cottrell said. “He was everything to us. Still is today.” From post-cards to his blood-stained bible. “I think he had it in his pocket. His shirt pocket or something,” Cottrell speculated. Seventy-five years after D-Day, the relics compliment fading memories of the brother she barely knew. But one thought always eased Cottrell’s pain. “I was with my mother when she passed away and I sure did hate to lose her. But the one bright thing was thinking, ‘Well, now maybe she has seen her boy that she has grieved all of these years for…””
On Thursday, June 6th, 2019 on the 75th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy, the D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia honored the men who lost their lives on that tragic day as well as those who survived to tell their stories. Veterans from all over the United States came out to remember their fallen brothers in arms. During this ceremony Vice President Pence spoke and World War II era planes flew overhead. On the right are the pictures of the Bedford Boys who died on June 6th, 1944. The Bedford Boys of Company A and F, 116th Infantry Regiment would spearhead the invasion at Normandy. They would also be one of the first units to be gunned down by German fire on Omaha Beach. It is said that Bedford would lose more men Per Capita than anywhere in the nation. It remains a tragedy to this very day, that so many of our boys were ripped away prematurely.

To the right are the 19 men of Company A and the 1 man from Company F who were killed in action on D-Day 75 years ago.
**Visitor to the Museum Served on D-Day**

A couple from England came by the museum this past summer, the gentleman, a British World War II D-Day Veteran was generous enough to share his experiences with our Genealogist Jennifer Thomson. The following is a brief summary of Peter Oliver’s experiences during the war and on D-Day. Typed as written.

My Wartime and D-Day Experiences

By: Peter Robert Oliver

Having spent half of the latter part of my schooling in Southampton in air raid shelters, it was natural when I left school at 14 to want to be part of the War Effort. Among my jobs when leaving school I worked for a time in an aircraft factory near Southampton which entailed a long cycle ride to Hamble returning home late at night through the blackout and on occasion air raid sirens, which marked yet another German onslaught at Southampton. On arrival home I would don my ARP (Air Raid Precautions) badge and attach myself to a local ARP office, delivering messages and helping to ensure that local blackout laws were adhered to. Too young to be in the Armed Services I managed to get a job at the age of 15 as an Ordinary Seaman on an Admiralty Merchant Naval ship.

It was a salvage vessel very aptly named ‘HELP’ and one of a number that the Government had taken on at that time with a good eye to their future needs. The ‘HELP’ was a small ship with a displacement of 1000 tons. Extending from its bow were two large horns each capable of lifting more than 100 tons from the sea bed with the aid of enormous winches on either side of the ship. To these were shackled cables of 9 inch circumference which on occasion would break under the weight and send the wires whipping across the deck, sufficient to decapitate anyone in their path, and rocking the boat wildly.

We sailed under the blue ensign of the Admiralty with a crew of around 40 who were mainly civilians, but as the ship was well armed with Oerlikan anti aircraft guns and machine guns it also carried two naval gunners and a royal naval officer who was in charge of salvage operations. Very significant among the crew were two deep sea divers.

My first trip to sea, now aged 16, was a hair-raising mission in a storm to rescue three squaddies who were adrift on a mulberry harbour which had broken loose from its moorings. It seemed quite some time before we located the unfortunate trio which took us within three miles of the French coast where the Germans were of course in occupation. It was impossible to bring them on board as the seas were mountainous lines until the squaddies managed to secure a couple to the mulberry harbour and we slowly towed them back to England, spread-eagled on the top clinging for dear life.

Later in May we anchored off the Isle of Wight in fine weather and played cards on deck as if the war was over. That of course was not so as the number of vessels around us was rapidly increasing and we moved to Portland in preparation to join the flotilla of ships intended for the invasion. I frankly have no idea when we left Portland, or where we were going. At my age of 16 I was not privy to that information, but I understand it was on the 29th May that we left Portland destined for the French beaches. The weather had turned foul which had been responsible for a delay of the major event but soon things really started to happen. We moved with an increasingly large number of ships until one morning noise became intense and it was obvious the invasion had begun.

It became known we had been seconded to the American Forces who were in charge of the Omaha and Utah beaches, and that was where we were heading. We also learned there had been a near massacre of the American invasion forces at Omaha. As we moved closer we set about the unsightly task of clearing a passage to the beach. But worse was to come when it became time to remove the larger vessels which had been sunk in deeper waters, to the horror of our very brave divers.

We spent some time working at Omaha. The fighting had since moved from the beach and was now inland. That’s when the air raids started, when all the back-up forces, equipment and provisions were being landed. At night there were a number of visits from German aircraft that mainly dropped flares to light up the scene below to guide the screaming Stuka bombers that followed. This at least afforded our gunners target practice with their attempts to shoot down the flares and the bombers that followed. It was also added excitement for me, as with an Oerlikon gun situated on the port side of the shop above my bunk sleep was impossible so I remained on deck helping where I could. Our two Royal Naval gunners were great guys. One was a Londoner known only to us as Tosh, who manned the gun on the port side. I was trilled when he permitted me on one occasion to help with reloading the gun.

The other on the starboard side was Taffy from Wales, who a couple of years prior had been torpedoed when in a convoy to Russia and had spent around 20 days injured in an open boat in the Arctic Sea.

We had been working off Omaha beach at this time where there had been utter chaos. There were many bodies in the water. Our instruction was to identify them, weight them and sink them. This played on my mind for a long time. Our divers had the difficult task of working on or alongside many sunken vessels
with bodies visibly trapped inside the wreckage. The ashen faces of our divers on their return to the surface was testimony to the many horrors witnessed—without doubt justification for the awards they later received.

After Omaha we took a look at Utah beach, which at that time did not require our attention. So we moved up the coast to await the fall of Cherbourg and to become the first allied ship to enter the French port following the invasion. The port was still dangerous with German saboteurs left behind. I personally had a close encounter with a German mine which, unlike the ones in the Beano, didn't have spikes sticking out of it (this one was as bald as an egg), and limpet mines were used at night by undercover enemy forces. In addition departing Germans has pushed close to 100 massive objects such as cranes, etc into the waters to obstruct our forces and ships. We remained in Cherbourg grafting hard night and day for a number of months and I recall at one time being too tired to eat and too hungry to sleep. We finally left moving up coast towards Germany stopping on the way at the port of Le Havre and spending time to clear some of the 60 vessels sunk in the mouth of the harbour. At this port we were delighted to participate in the wild celebrations heralding the end of the war in Europe. I then moved to another company ship The Southampton Salvor on which we worked at Oostende, Flushing, Zaandam and other areas in Amsterdam, finishing at Bremerhaven, Germany, before returning to England.

Among the campaign medals I received was the 1939-45 Star to commemorate our involvement in operational waters off the French coast following D-day; Atlantic Star for six months service afloat in the Atlantic or in Home waters; France and Germany Star; Defense and Victory Medals (UK). Years later I was delighted to be among those to receive the French order of merit, the Legion D’Honneur, to recognize my involvement in the liberation of France.

After serving two and a half years at sea on arrival home I was, would you believe, called up at the age of 18 for national service into the RAF Regiment for ‘hostilities only’, where I served for a further two years.

Recorded in the London Gazette, the following awards were made:
Lt. Cdr. DJR Davies was recommended for a decoration in 1945 for his work in salvage operations on the Normandy Beaches and port clearance in the US Sector; Captain, Reith LENNARD, Master s.v. HELP, was awarded Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. He demonstrated outstanding seamanship throughout the operations; John Gordon SMITH, Senior Diver, sv HELP, awarded British Empire Medal. He displayed a high sense of duty throughout, under most difficult conditions and was the only diver working when the temperature of the water was below freezing point. In Cherbourg, where mines were plentiful and were exploding, he remained under water until he had complete picture of the obstruction to be cleared. He also placed sweep wire under a barge loaded with mines and thus enabled it to be successfully removed; William Charles Irons (Bill), Second Mate and Boatswain, sv HELP, received a commendation.

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Willis H. Clemont was born April 11, 1921 in Forest, Va. Son of the late Thomas Hawkins and Madilyn Crutchfield Clemont and devoted stepson of Hattie C. Clemont.

Willis attended Public Schools in Bedford County, Va. He graduated from Bedford Training School. He furthered his education and attended North Carolina A & T College in Greensboro, North Carolina where he graduated Summa Cum Laude with a degree in physics and Virginia State College in Petersburg, Va. where he received a Master of Arts degree in Physics.

He was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society and Sigma Psi Sigma Honor Society. Willis taught in the Bedford County Public School System and at St. Paul’s Polytechnic Institute in Lawrenceville, Va.

He has one nephew Thomas Davis of Miami, Florida and a host of nieces, nephews and other relatives and friends. He departed this life February 16, 2002. His interment was in Cedar Hill Cemetery in Suitland, Maryland.

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Sarah loved her church Otterville Baptist and served as a deaconess, member of two choirs and was a faithful Sunday school and Christian educator. Upon her return to her hometown of Bedford she quickly became involved in many organizations in the community including the Neighborhood Watch, NAACP, Voter's League, Peaks of Otter Association, and was a faithful volunteer of the Bedford Christian Free Clinic.

On Sunday April 5, 2015 Sarah E. Brown Davis entered into eternal rest and was buried in Otterville Baptist Church Cemetery in Bedford, VA.

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Harry Wright, Bedford Native, Dies; Made Fortune in Mexico

The Article Below ran in the Bedford Democrat on August 9, 1954. Typed as written.

Harry Wright, a native of Bedford who became a millionaire steel industrialist in Mexico, died Aug. 15 in Mexico City. He was 78 years old.

Born in Bedford, Mr. Wright was a son of the late George D. and Betty Pannill Wright. As a youth he was employed by the Bedford Democrat.

His mother was long an active member of the Bedford Baptist Church and a memorial window was erected there honoring her work in the Ladies’ Auxiliary and the Sunday School. His father for many years was a member of the firm of Bolling and Wright, tobacco manufacturers in Bedford, and after his father’s death, young Harry became the main support of the family.

Made a Fortune

Harry Wright went to Mexico in 1907 as a salesman and became stranded when his firm withdrew during a business panic. He decided to stay and made a fortune in Mexico.

He parlayed three carloads of metal into an industry which had vast holdings, including mines in New Mexico, projects in Argentina and Chile and numerous plants in Mexico. He founded La Consolidada, S. A., in Mexico City, one of the largest steel and cooper industries in Mexico, from which he retired in 1943.

An active sportsman and amateur photographer, he founded and was for 14 years president of the Mexico Golf Association and is known as the father of golf in that country. He was president of the Mexico City Country Club for 22 years.

He also organized the first basement league in Mexico.

A world traveler, Mr. Wright and his first wife, Mrs. Edna M. Wright brought to their Mexico City mansion souvenirs from every part of the world.
The Celebrated Trial of Hook Vs. Venable
- or -
Why the thriving village of New London was condemned to wither and die

By: Dr. Clifton W. Potter, Jr.
Unknown Source and date. Typed as written.

When the Revolutionary War is considered in most classrooms, or studied by the devotee of history—whether professional or amateur—the concentration is usually of the main events from Lexington and Concord to Yorktown. There never seems to be enough time to explore the back roads of the past, and that is unfortunate, because often there are found tales and anecdotes which not only enhance the understanding of an era, but sometimes profoundly alter the common perception of it. Lynchburg had only a minor role to play in the Revolutionary War, but a few miles to the west in New London events transpired which condemned that thriving village to wither and die. A celebrated case involving the cattle of a Scot named Johnny Hook was such a happening.

During the early months of 1781 when the theater of war shifted to Virginia as Cornwallis pursued his plan to harry the state that was home to many of the leaders of the American cause, a certain Mr. Venable, who was a commissary agent for the American army appropriated two of Johnny Hook’s steers to feed the troops. It seems that Venable did not observe all of the proper steps required to carrying out such a transaction, and thus when the war ended, Hook, a New London merchant, brought an action of trespass against Venable in the district court of New London. William Cowan, a lawyer who was respected in the community, represented Hook, while none other than Patrick Henry took up Venable’s cause. The involvement of perhaps the most famous orator of the revolutionary period engendered an interest in the case far beyond its real importance, and the curious flocked to New London from far and wide.

From the very beginning of the trial Henry treated the whole matter as a big joke, knowing that his formidable reputation as well as his immense popularity would secure acquittal for his client regardless of the points of law in question; and he was not wrong. Like a skilled musician, Henry played on the sentiments of the jury as well as the crowd by conjuring visions of half naked soldiers weak with cold and hunger—the last a need which could have been and was satisfied by the now famous steers. Having recovered their strength, these heroes of the cause dear to every Americans were able to defeat Cornwallis at Yorktown. Henry’s defense lacked a certain sense of logical progression, a fault of which he was well aware. However, he did not care because he knew the court and the spectators were with him. Then he turned on Hook and implied that he was not only mean spirited, but he was also unpatriotic. Lest the crowd become nasty and do harm to Hook, Henry then transformed his advisory from a servant of George III into a figure of fun. When he finished there was such an outburst of laughter that William Cowan, Hook’s lawyer, could not present his case or be heard over din. Even the Clerk of the Court, James Steptoe, allegedly behaved in an unseemly manner by rolling on the ground, although he later denied it. The verdict was naturally for the defendant, the jury merely awarding a penny in compensation to the plaintiff.

Patrick Henry, the good citizens of New London, and writers who recount the story seem perplexed at Johnny Hook’s insistence that he be compensated for his loss to a cause which he obviously supported. Later authorities also seem to have difficulty in understanding why so many residents of New London, who were Scots like Hook, left the area after the trial, thus crippling the economy of the once prosperous village. The explanation is really quite simple. To a Scot, cattle are not merely possessions, they are a mark of social status, and no honest person would consider taking cattle from his neighbor without proper recompense. To do so would be to announce to the world that the person so deprived had no status in the community, and was therefore fair game. In Scotland Johnny Hook might well have paid mail dubh to someone to protect his cattle from the commissaries. The phrase means “blackmail,” and it was essentially protection money. Hook did not object to the feeding of the soldiers with the appropriated steers, but he took issue with his status in the community being called into question. Once disgraced he had not choice but to leave New London, and those Scots who were sympathetic to his views felt compelled to leave lest they suffer a similar fate.

The whole affair was the result of an insensitivity to the folkways and mores of a group of immigrants whose contributions to the Lynchburg area have been many and varied. Perhaps the late twentieth-century can learn something from the case of Hook versus Venable.

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Bedford Has Share of Ghosts

By: Lee Graves

This article appeared in the Bedford Bulletin-Democrat on October 30, 1975 and is typed as written.

One evening around the early part of the century Mrs. J.W. Ballard, Dr. Willie Gills and several other Bedford residents were standing chatting at dusk on the porch of Avenel. Their curiosity was slightly aroused when they saw a gracious lady, attired in a white gown and parasol of outdated fashion, walk down the lawn where Avenel Avenue now lies.

There was little unusual about the lady but for her dress, and most of those on the porch watched her pass with casual interest. Their calm turned to alarm, however, when she vanished, apparently into a large oak tree. “Did you all see what I saw?” Mrs. Ballard inquired of her visitors, and all agreed they had.

“White Lady”

This instance was probably the most famous sighting of the “White Lady of Avenel”, gracious ghost who has haunted Avenel for as long as Mrs. Harry Maupin, daughter of Mrs. Ballard and one of the home’s present residents, can recall. The “White Lady” is not the only spirit reported to haunt Bedford, and trick-or-treaters this Friday night should be forewarned that she is one of quite a few specters which may greet them this Halloween.

The “White Lady” herself may cause no harm, for in her appearances she has caused no grief. In fact, Mrs. Maupin feels, “The ‘White Lady’ watches after us.”

Various Explanations

There are various explanations for her origin, including that she is the manifestation of the wispy female in Sir Walter Scott’s novel, “The Monastery.” The name for Avenel is taken from that novel, and in its pages is described “the White Lady of Avenel.”

Another explanation is that she is the spirit of Miss Letitia Burwell, who owned the place until her death in 1906. She may also be Fanny Steptoe Burwell, affectionately known as “Old Miss,” and used as the title for Bowyer Campbell’s novel about Avenel.

Though the “White Lady” has been seen on numerous occasions (once with a gentleman dressed in equally outdated garb), the late Harry Maupin refused to believe in her until she paid him a personal visit. The Bedford druggist had just finished Winston Churchill one evening and retired to his bedroom.

While sitting on the edge of the bed and preparing to settle down, the lady, again dressed in her flowing white gown, passed slowly before his door, her face lost in the shadows. Mr. Maupin no longer doubted her existence.

Moving Door

Another curious aspect of the haunted Avenel home is the behavior of a certain upstairs door. Willie Ballard, who used to occupy one of the upstairs rooms, found that one of his doors would open at midnight every night no matter what pains he took to insure it was closed before he retired.

The sightings of the “White Lady” have subsided at Avenel in the very recent past, but something strange has been going on in the townhouses now located on what was Avenel’s tennis courts. Richard and Ila Freeman, who used to live in the townhouse closest to Avenel, say they definitely felt they were visited by something outside of their normal experience, whether it was the “White Lady” or not.

Not Seen, But Felt

For the two and a half years they lived at No. 16 they felt a number of unsettling experiences. They never actually saw anything, for the sensations were more tactile, with hot and cold spells coming quickly.

“It was like air moving, like something displacing it,” said Richard. “On many occasions you could feel her and you knew she was there.”

They said they knew nothing of the “White Lady” before starting to feel these visitations, and Ila said, “We were both frightened the first time.”

She happened to mention it to her physician, Dr. D.H. Robinson, who told them of haunted Avenel and reassured them the lady was friendly.

“At the time I felt it was a lot of hogwash, and I didn't believe it,” said Ila, “Never, ever had I believed in this (ghosts) before, and now I do!”

White Mark

The only visual evidence they have of one of her visits is a mark left on a painting of a bunch of roses. “One night after she visited us there was a white spot of the roses. It is very distinct and it won’t come off. It was never there before.” It is about the size of a thumbprint and looks like a mark left by a brush (or something brushing against the painting).

Asked if their son Kevin may have accidentally caused the mark and not admitted it, Richard said, “I’ve caught him at worse things than that and he has admitted it.”

No one else in the row of townhouses says they definitely have experienced similar feelings, and Ed Johnson, who has lived in No. 16 for three months, has not been disturbed. Linda Butler, who used to live a few doors down, said she felt what the Freeman’s described during a visit, but added they had been talking about it previously and admitted she is extremely sensitive to suggestions.

Others

Whether or not the “White Lady” has expanded her calling range is a question not be answered here, but the Maupins, Ballards and
Freemans are not the only Bedford residents with ghost stories.

One lady, who wished her name not to be mentioned, told a certain story of her father, who for purposes of this article we shall call Mr. Jones. Mrs. Jones was in the habit of taking her children and visiting her mother in the country for weeks at a time. On the weekends Mr. Jones would ride by horseback to the home, usually taking the Salem Lynchburg Turnpike (as it was called those days).

One particular evening, however, Mr. Jones found he would have to make the journey through a treacherous rain storm, and opted to take a shortcut which involved crossing a river with which he was not totally familiar.

Strange Rider

Once underway, he was soon thoroughly soaked and found the trip increasingly distasteful. At one point, after successfully crossing the river, he thought he could discern through the sheets of rain a house which looked vaguely familiar, and he recalled that one of the several boys of that family had died very recently.

Suddenly he saw a horse and rider of an unearthly white pallor come up to him out of the rain. The face of the rider was unclear, so Mr. Jones asked, “What’s your name?” The figure responded with the name of the boy who had just died.

A little disconcerted, Mr. Jones said, “I thought it was he who just died.” The figure looked through the rain and answered, “It was, but I’m riding here with you now, aren’t I?” Mr. Jones wasted no time in spurring his horse to a gallop and leaving the area behind as quickly as possible.

Empty Pitcher

Mr. Jones was reputed to have been a sober man little given to lofty flights of fancy, and the fact that he seldom used the shortcut rules out the possibility of someone familiar with his habits playing a prank on him. Another of the ghost tales passed down concerns one of the older homes in Bedford. As was the custom in those days, a water pitcher would be filled and placed in each room for inhabitants to wash up with. In one room, however, the pitcher was always empty the next morning, whether or not there had been anyone in the room during the night. It was said that each night a pretty girl could be seen sitting at the window pouring the water on the shrubs beneath. As if to confirm the tale, the rosebush directly under the window grew prolifically, just as if it had been watered every night!

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Five Oaks Plantation

By: Rebecca Jackson

This article appeared in Lake Life Magazine in the Spring of 2015 and is typed as written.

Planted by hands long in repose, periwinkle, iris and narcissus still bloom in the spring around the remains of the Five Oaks Plantation manor house.

Five Oaks was once the centerpiece of a thriving southside Bedford County tobacco estate, the ochre soils around it dampened by the sweat of slaves and the elevated front veranda the venue for summer social gatherings of Victoria-era gentry.

Today, the manse is but a ghost, silent for decades, enshrouded by a forest of the oaks for which it was named, maple, hickory, cedar and tulip poplar and an undergrowth labyrinth studded with rodent and snake burrows. It stands just off Smith Mountain Lake Parkway inside Smith Mountain Lake State Park, a sentinel to the 19th century and witness to the American Civil War.

Vehicles towing boats and other watercraft thunder by the crumbling structure daily, throngs in the summertime, when a hydroelectric impoundment and the lake it created beckons with the promise of leisure and recreation. Where 150 years ago the walls echoed with the sounds of human emotion—the laughter of levity, the cries of newborn babies, the sobs of the bereaved, an owl hoots from its perch in the eaves, deer hooves crunch through fallen leaves and squirrels paw the frozen earth for a hidden cache of nuts.

Nearby are the graves of owners and slaves, segregated in two separate vestpocket cemeteries, all cut down by death, the great equalizer.

Only the foundation and brick wall segments of the three-story house with dormer windows remain, victims of time and neglect. The house faces the pavement beyond, the old Anthony’s Ford Road before the coming of the Lake. To the local inhabitants, the house inside the park is known by a variety of names—Five Oaks, The Big House, The Sabra Saunders House.

In the early 1970s, Clara Lambeth, then president of the Bedford Historical Society, pleaded with the state, which had acquired the land for Smith Mountain Lake State Park in 1969, to stabilize and restore Five Oaks.

But then, as now, state coffers were lean. Development of the state park as a recreational resource was more important to officials in Richmond than spending an estimated $100,000 to refurbish a long-vacant and rapidly deteriorating relic of the old Confederacy.

The plantation house was acquired by the Virginia Division of Parks and Recreation in the late 1960s and included in the state park. When the state purchased the land in 1969, the entire plantation was included in the purchase.

Researchers are not entirely sure when the plantation house was built in the 19th century, but many believe Thomas Saunders constructed it in the late 1850s. According to the records, Saunders’ brothers, Henry, owned the land and after his death, Saunders purchased the property. Records show that George and Susan Sabra Saunders Cunningham were married Dec. 19, 1866.
and took over Five Oaks or the “Big House.” George Cunningham, known for the rest of his life as “Captain” Cunningham, served at that rank in the Confederate Army. Susan was born at the house on Feb. 12, 1848. Her father, Thomas Saunders, owned four plantations and over 400 slaves, according to historical records.

The house was made of brick and had unique architectural features, including an elevated front porch and box windows. Five Oaks was considered one of the finest houses in the area at that time.

During a raid by the infamous Union General David “Black Dave” Hunter, it was said that soldiers invaded the house and forced the Saunders daughters to wait on them and the slaves. The girls soon realized that flight was the wisest action and learned to flee to the slave cabins when Yankee troops approached. The slaves held their peace and never gave away the hiding places of their young mistresses.

The War Between the States brought with it hard times and destruction for the Saunders and Cunningham families. The Cunningham’s three sons Otho, George and Dan had to rebuild the plantation and relinquish the tobacco farming as a way to keep their plantation workers and family fed.

The war, referred to by many Southerners of the time as “the recent unpleasantness,” left its mark on the estate. Practically all the money had been invested in Confederate bonds and currency, and these were worthless. Most of the horses, mules and other livestock had been stolen by Union soldiers. It took years for the plantation and its inhabitants to recover.

According to “Big Dan: The Story of a Colorful Railroader,” by Dr. Frank Cunningham Jr. a book about his uncle Dan Cunningham, one of many people who grew up in the house, holidays at Five Oaks were festive ones after the War between the States. The table was loaded with ham and turkey and the buffet held decanters of brandy to cheer visitors who came to the house to drink toasts to the yuletide. Neighbors dropped in from adjoining plantations: The Packing House Place, the Stone House, the Nichols Acres, and the Cunningham Place. These plantation families were equally pressed for ready cash, as they’d lost their resources in the war.

“Yet they strove to breathe life into the gentlemanly country mode of existence,” the book states. “The Yankees had licked their government, not their breeding.

Cunningham began his railroad career at 18 with the Norfolk and Western Railway Co. in Roanoke where he was a general foreman. Later, he served as a general foreman for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad in Needles, California, superintendent of shops for the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railway in Salt Lake City, Utah, superintendent of motive power for the Denver and Salt Lake Railroad and master mechanic of the Salt Lake Division of the Rio Grande Railway.

As a boy Cunningham would climb to the second story porch of Five Oaks and hang on the white columns reaching to the roof. In the distance, he could see the high ridges of the Peaks of Otter, with the Flat Top rising 4,000 feet and its companion, Sharp Top, a few hundred feet shorter. He often saw his father ride off in the direction of Liberty, now Bedford, a day’s ride away.

The well was back of the dining room. The bottom floor of Five Oaks, “The Big House,” had a large kitchen and storeroom at one end. Both the kitchen and dining room had large open hearth fireplaces in which cranes were used for holding pots and sometimes children watched the cook roast meat over the flames.

Grandma Sabra’s room was the most popular spot on the second floor for the children. She had a trundle bed and the boys vied for the honor of sleeping. They also sought the honor of holding fire to Grandma’s clay pipe. Grandma had to have her clay pipe every evening.

Across the large hall from Grandma’s room was the formal parlor, seldom used except when the family had company. Then the room would come alive with flames from the huge fireplace and the guests would sit around the fire as they swapped stories of the war, the tobacco markets and county gossip.

When the fire grew too warm for them—it had ample room for a back log sat on horsehair sofas and listened to a guest play on the square spinet usually out of tune. By the time the adults decided to play cards on the marble top center table, the youngsters had to go to bed.

So the children would climb up to the third floor of Five Oaks, which was made up entirely of bedrooms. Each room had a four-poster bed with rope cords instead of springs and the cords made an excellent springboard for the boys.

On the plantation was a private distillery and every year, the cellar at “The Big House” was restocked with 30 barrels of peach and apple brandy. This, explained the master of the house, was in case “somebody takes sick.” There was never any unusual amount of sickness at the place, but always 30 barrels needed replenished at the end of the year.

The Saunders and Cunningham children often played on the spacious lawn of the “Big House”. One of those children was W. Boone Saunders (1878-1968), who went on to become a political leader in Wyoming. He was elected, as a Democrat, to the Wyoming House of Representatives in 1924 and served in the sessions of 1925 and 1927, under the state’s first female Governor, Nellie Tayloe Ross. Additionally, Saunders served in the Wyoming State Senate for a number of terms, eventually becoming president of the ? ?.

Other residents of the manse associated with the development of the Midwest were James Goob and Mattie Dudley Saunders. Just beyond the main house in the edge of the woods, stands a seven-
foot granite marker where these two rest.

Saunders (1841-1914) at one time lived in Union Hall in Franklin County. He was a member of the first outfit (Rifle Grays) to leave Bedford County for service in the Confederate Army and was wounded at the Battle of Seven Pines. He was Franklin County surveyor for eight years. In March of 1866, with his family, he departed for Dakota Territory as the Northern Pacific Railway had been built through the territory and was seeking settlers. Leaving peach trees in bloom in Franklin County, and after a five-day journey on the train, the family arrived in Gladstone, Dakota Territory, in the middle of a raging blizzard. Saunders became U.S. deputy surveyor for government lands in the territory and surveyed the border that separated North and South Dakota, which became states in 1889. After several years of ranching, Saunders entered political life and served as clerk of the court in Stark County, North Dakota, until his retirement in 1913.

A daughter of James G. and Mattie Dudley Saunders was Sabra Saunders (1879-1971), who married James H. Palmer of Fargo, ND, in 1900. Palmer was employed by the Northern Pacific Railroad in Montana, North Dakota and California before returning to Virginia. The Palmers purchased Five Oaks when he worked as a railway agent in Huddleston for the Virginian Railway. He was later agent for the Virginian Railway in Charlotte County, where he died in 1928.

Sabra Saunders Palmer was a teacher in North Dakota, and in 1963, while residing with a son in Moneta, was honored by the Governor of Nebraska as a pioneer settler and teacher in Dakota Territory (which then included part of Nebraska).

Five Oaks eventually passed on to Saunders descendants, who sold it in 1931.

Local author chronicles 265 year history of the Bedford County Sheriff’s Office

By: Siobhan McGirl

This article is taken from WDBJ7 on April 2, 2019, and is typed as written.

The history of the Bedford County Sheriff’s Office is now recorded for anyone to read. Centuries worth of history is jam-packed into a 104 page book. “It’s a salute to the men who have held the office,” said Don Garlock Jr., author of Vigilance: 265 years of the Bedford County Sheriff’s Office. “It’s a love letter to Bedford County.” Garlock has spent the last year combing through countless records, piecing together the story of the sheriff’s office. “My wife finally had to tell me look put the research down and slowly back away,” said Garlock. The deep dive unearthed hidden gems such as letters sent between former sheriffs and George Washington. Garlock also found signatures for some of the 63 men who held office and even
Bedford’s Young American Hero’s

The following men and women are some of those from Bedford County who served in World War II. These local’s fought for the protection and freedom of America. These pictures pay a small tribute to those who served the Country. People say a picture is worth a thousand words, and I believe in this case the words would describe bravery, heroism, and determination.

Row 1 (left to right): Robert Sidney Brewbaker, Fred L. Cline, Wesley E. Kendall, Robert Earl Lacy, James C. Lawless
Row 2 (left to right): Thomas E. Layman, Wallace Rucker Mayhew, Maurice Francis O’Donohoe, Jr., William G. Padgett, Macon M. Rider
Row 3 (left to right): Raymond James Creasey, Roy Samuel Croft, Jr., Bernard R. Cundiff, Ernest D. Cundiff, Raymond J. Dowdy
Row 4 (left to right): William Alfred Fellers, Jr., Ernest Wilson Fizer, William Francis Foster, Cyrus M. Fulton, Basil IRL Hawley
Row 1 (left to right): Edward Rudolph Haynes, Jack D. Hogan, James Allen Hogan, Aubrey L. Inge, Carrol A. Johnson
Row 2 (left to right): Clyde Peyton Wilson, James Hampton Wingfield, Henry Albert Woodford, Malcolm E. Wooldridge, Jr. (Pete), Clarence G. Stanley.
Row 4 (left to right): Stephen Earl Watson, Harold Edward Wilkes
Ray Nance, Last of the Bedford Boys, Dies at 94
By: Richard Goldstein
This article is from The New York Times. It was released by the newspaper on April 22, 2009, and is typed as written.

Ray Nance, the last survivor of the Bedford Boys, soldiers from the Blue Ridge foothills whose heavy losses at Omaha Beach symbolized the sacrifices of all the Americans who fell at Normandy on D-Day, died Sunday in Bedford, Va. He was 94.

His death was announced by his family.

They were teenage buddies in the Depression days, growing up in Bedford, a town of 3,200 in central Virginia. They joined the National Guard together, they marched in Fourth of July parades and they gathered with their girlfriends at American Legion halls.

But the country life faded for the young men who would become known as the Bedford Boys. In February 1941, they were called into federal service as part of the 29th Infantry Division.

Assembled in Company A of the division’s 116th Infantry, they shipped off to Britain in September 1942. Lt. Elisha Ray Nance, the son of a tobacco farmer, helped train them for combat.

In the early hours of June 6, 1944, when the long-awaited Allied invasion of northern Europe got under way, 30 soldiers from Bedford and its environs were among the first infantrymen approaching Omaha Beach. The bombings and shellings preceding the landings failed to soften up the German gunners in the heights. The beach became the scene of carnage.

Four of the 30 Bedford boys were in a landing craft that was hit by German fire and sank. Fished out of the waters, they were the fortunate ones; 19 others died approaching the beach or in their first moments on French soil, among them Capt. Taylor Fellers, the company commander. Lieutenant Nance’s boat, carrying a radio man and a medic, was the last craft from Company A to reach the sands.

“There was a pall of dust and smoke,” Mr. Nance recalled in a 2001 interview with WDBJ-TV in Roanoke, Va. “In the distance I could see the church steeple we were supposed to guide on. I waded out of the water up on the beach. I could not see anybody in front of me. I looked behind, and there’s nobody following me. I was alone in France.”

Most of the Bedford boys were dead or dying by then. In all, 22 were killed in the invasion.

“I started crawling,” Mr. Nance remembered. “There was continuous fire from mortars and machine guns.”

Soon he began to see bodies strewn on the beach, and he was shot twice in the foot and in the hand.

“When I thought there was no more hope, I looked up in the sky,” he told Alex Kershaw for his book “The Bedford Boys.” “I didn’t see anything up there. But I felt something settle over me. I got this warm feeling. I felt as though I was going to live.” He made it to a shelter beneath a cliff.

On July 16, the Western Union teletype at Green’s Drug Store began clattering with messages from the War Department announcing the deaths of the boys from town.

After a long period of hospitalization, Mr. Nance returned home. He farmed, then became a rural letter carrier.

To honor the memories of his men, he recruited a new Company A in the Virginia National Guard and helped organize a memorial service in town for the 10th anniversary of D-Day. Bedford was said to have lost more men per capita on D-Day than any other town in America. The origin of that claim is unclear, but the losses brought Congressional support for creation of a National D-Day Memorial in Bedford.

When the memorial’s granite arch was unveiled in May 2000, Mr. Nance struggled with his emotions. “It brings back a lot of bad memories,” he told The Associated Press. “I never really got over it, and I’m not sure if I ever will.”

The memorial was dedicated on June 6, 2001, in ceremonies attended by President George W. Bush. On Wednesday, a hearse with Mr. Nance’s body circled that memorial before burial with a military honor guard.

Mr. Nance is survived by his wife, Alpha; his daughters Martha Susan Cobb of Front Royal, Va., and Sarah Watson Jones of Richmond; his son, John, of Lynchburg, Va.; four grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Mr. Nance’s mail-carrying duties offered no respite from anguish. Some of the families on his rounds had lost sons on D-Day. He wondered what they might have been thinking his having survived.

“I never was very good at reading people’s hearts,” he once told The Richmond Times-Dispatch. “There was a little twinge of guilt that I was allowed to come back.”

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Lynchburg-area ghost stories and urban legends to get you in the Halloween spirit

By: Tori Walsh

With Halloween quickly approaching, we’ve been digging into our area’s ghost stories and weird urban legends—including tales of buried treasure—to get you into the holiday spirit.

Here are some we’ve tracked down, divided up by locality:

Appomattox County

On the morning of April 8, 1865, Lieutenant Colonel Augustus Root led the 15th Regiment New York Volunteer Cavalry on a charge into the village of Appomattox Court house. During the battle, Root was shot through the neck and killed instantly. The New Yorker was buried in the nearby yard of a home owned by Lewis Isbell until his family came to retrieve his body.

Now Isbell’s home acts as the part headquarters for Appomattox Court House National Historical Park.

According to a postcard from 1939, the house was dubbed by locals as “The Haunted House of Appomattox.”

According to park historian Patrick Schroeder, Root seemed to have stuck around after his death, but no one is exactly sure why. “Supposedly it’s haunted but there hasn’t been any activity in the last few years,” Schroeder said. “I haven’t had any experiences and usually I’m the one who’s here the most.”

Museum technician David Woolridge said the story he’s heard about Root appearing on the grounds happened back in the late 1980s during a living history weekend at the park. Woolridge said a reenactor escorted his wife into the headquarters to find the restroom when a man dressed as a Union soldier passed them on the stairs.

“He said the [soldier] was kind of rash and rude,” Woolridge said. “[The soldier] almost knocked his wife over.”

Woolridge said when the couple went back outside, the man asked a park official who the Union soldier was and why he was so rude to his wife.

“Everyone gave him a puzzled look,” Woolridge said. “They said no one was [portraying] a Union soldier.”

Eventually the couple found a picture of Root and realized the man on the stairs was the soldier himself.

Woolridge said he hasn’t seen Root himself, but thinks he may have heard him wandering around the grounds during his late nights at the office.

“I’ve always decided it’s either someone else at the park or it’s [Root],” he said. “But I think it’s best if I don’t try to find out.”

Campbell County

Though no one has proven Altavista’s Avoca Museum is haunted, producers from Syfy’s “Ghost Hunters” certainly thought it was. Executive director Mike Hudson said the museum was approached by the show to appear on the final season last year.

The historical home was built in 1901 by architect J. M. B. Lewis and has been designated as a Virginia Historical Landmark.

“I looked at the caller ID on my phone and it said Beverly Hills,” Hudson said about receiving the phone call.

Hudson said they declined to be on the show, but as for the museum being haunted?

“If there were ghosts here, they’ve been quiet over the last few years,” Hudson said. “Maybe they’re happy with the work we’ve been doing on the museum.”

While Hudson couldn’t confirm any ghost sightings, a quick Google search shows there are a few tales about the house—including mysterious stains appearing on furniture and tiles stacking against the door when construction crews would leave during the remodeling.

Bedford County

In the mid-1800s, a man by the name of Thomas Jefferson Beale was said to have buried $20 million worth of gold somewhere near Montvale in Bedford County. To find its location, Beale left behind three coded letters with a Lynchburg innkeeper, Robert Moriss.

The tale has been the subject of many television specials, including NBC’s “Unsolved Mysteries” and BBC’s show “Mysteries.” The codes are said to have inspired the movie “National Treasure.”

“Definitely, it’s real,” Montvale resident and author Ed Easterling said.

Easterling has been researching the treasure for many years and even wrote a book in 1995 called “In Search of a Golden Vault: The Beale Treasure Mystery.”

“I’ve looked for the treasure about six to seven times,” Easterling said.

Since Beale gave Moriss the key to the code, the location of the treasure remains a mystery, if it exists at all. Johnson’s Orchard in Bedford County has been suggested as one possible location and even developed an apple called the “Gold Nugget,” according to the orchard’s website.

Easterling said he believes the tale has generated interest because people love treasure stories.

“Everyone wants to get rich quick,” he said. “It’s like the lottery.”

Easterling said he believes he knows where the treasure is buried,
though that location is something he plans on keeping to himself.

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**Revolutionary War Pensions—Bedford County, VA**

*Taken from Pension records in the Museum’s Genealogical Library, Pages 1-3, Typed as written.*

Men during the Revolutionary War fought for what they believed in just like in every other war. They were fighting to achieve freedom from British oppression. The following is some Revolutionary War pension records from men who lived or was stationed in Bedford County.

**ADAMS, HENRY**

September 24, 1832 I am 71 years old. I was called as a militiaman to stand guard over a number of Tories who were taken prisoner and confined to jail in New London, I was under the command of Captain Cotral. I think I served three months. Later I went out together with many of my neighbors to go against the British who were then in North Carolina. I was with General Washington Light Horse through various parts of North Carolina. I was at the Battle of Guilford. I served out my time and was discharged. I can prove my service record by Henry Brown in New London who served with me and the old men in the neighborhood. I was born in Bedford County (according to his father) on February 3, 1761.

Witnesses were: Robert Campbell and Henry Brown.

**ANDREW, THOMAS**

I am 71 years of age. I was born in Cumberland County on December 12, 1761. I was drafted June 1, 1780 and marched to Hillsborough, North Carolina and attached to the 4th Va. Regt. I remained there till General Gaits arrived, at which time we were marched to Rangely’s Mill 12 miles from Camden. We joined the Continental troops. I was in the Battle of Camden when General Stevens horse was shot. After the defeat of the American Army many of the militia returned home. But me and about half of the retreated to Peedee River where quite a few re-enlisted From Peedee we marched back to Hillsborough. After I returned home I enlisted again as a substitute Cumberland Courthouse through Petersburg to a little town called Suffolk, Virginia. The British was then in possession of Norfolk. I was assigned as a guard at Long bridge to prevent the British from crossing. We remained until the British army cut off the ordinary communication to them and the Army stationed in Suffolk. We retreated across Dismal Swamp across logs and joined the army at Suffolk. There we watched the British movements in Norfolk the remainder of that tour which expired in 1781. I later served another tour as a substitute but can’t remember the man’s name. This time I was marched to Barracks which was about fifteen miles below Richmond and then to Raccoon Ford on the Rapid Ann river where we chased British soldiers. I was discharged August 1, 1781. In 1782 I moved to Prince Edward County and in 1787 I moved to Bedford County.

Signed Thomas Andrews

**AUSTIN, RICHARD**

September 24, 1832, I am 76 years of age. I was born in Prince George County, Maryland April 18, 1754. I was drafted into the Militia of Prince George County, Maryland in June, 1777. I marched through Baltimore. We crossed the Susquahannah River and went on to Swann Creek then to Brandywine and Schyhiile to White House. There we were driven back by the British. I then went to Conartoga Valley, Pennsylvania. There I joined Colonel Gulp’s 3rd Regt. of Maryland. We united with the army commanded by General G. Washington somewhere between “White House” and Germantown. My officers were Major Lyle, Captain Henry Hill, Colonel Luke Marlborough and Lt. John Nailor. My tour expired before the Battle of Germantown but I remained until it was over. I returned home where I remained until April 1778. I then marched to Baltimore where Colonel Gulp took charge. While I was there I caught smallpox and as soon as I recovered I was sent to Philadelphia and placed in the hospital and there I remained during my entire term of service which expired about Christmas time. Even then I was too sick to return home. I was not able to leave the hospital until March 1779. I recovered during the time to be able to march and I got new clothes for that purpose but while they were delayed recruiting others I was taken sick a third time and remained until I was discharged. I lived in Prince George County, Maryland till after the Revolutionary War and removed to Bedford County in 1788. My father had a register of my age but I don’t know what became of it.

Signed Richard Austin

**BARTON, ELISHA**

March 26, 1834

About 1781 I joined as a volunteer in militia of Virginia from Fauquier County. I served six months, commanded by Capt. William Tublett. After some weeks we marched to the Town of Falmouth near Fredericksburg on Rappahannock River. We were there for three weeks then we were ordered to Bowling Green immediately on the great road from Richmond to Fredericksburg in the County of Caroline. We were there for a short time and then to Yorktown. I was discharged after six months. I was born in Fauquier County in 1757. Two years after the close of the war I moved to Bedford County.

Signed Elisha Barton


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**Bedford Churches Formed Before Revolutionary War**

*Religious Emphasis Has Followed Growth of County Through 200 Years*

In the 200-year history of Bedford County, the religious life of the community has kept equal pace with others and has been the strength for the many advancements in the years.
The early settlers of the county were Christian leaders and religious institutions began to arise very shortly after the county was established.

In 1916 a religious census of the county showed 12,171 members; in 1926, 16,706; in 1936, 15,302, and this year it is estimated around 17,000. The Baptist denomination is the leading group in the county, followed by the Methodists, Presbyterians, Christian, Catholic and Episcopalian.

Earliest Recorded reference to any religious institutions or organizations in Bedford County is a deed recorded in 1762 from Robert Walker conveying 20 acres on a branch of Wreck Island Creek to the trustees of the Presbyterian Church of Upper Falling.

The Established Church of England and the Colonies (Episcopal) dates it history to the establishment Jan. 1, 1755, of the denomination in the country. A deed dated Dec. 28, 1762, conveyed 496 acres to the group in Bedford County which was the beginning of the local church. St. John’s Episcopal Church in Bedford is the leading church of the denomination; others now in existence being St. Stephen’s Church at Forest, Trinity Church near Boonsboro and St. Thomas Church Sedalia. An early church was St. Mark’s Church at Bufordsville, now Montvale. A church serving the Negro population, St. Phillip’s, is located in Bedford.

Peaks Presbyterian Church north of Bedford is first mentioned in 1761 and was organized in 1764. Academy Church at New London was formed between 1858-1860 and the Bedford Presbyterian Church was built in 1844. Other Presbyterian Churches are located at Montvale, Villamont, Cool Spring, Laurel Grove and Pigsah near New London.

Earliest of the Baptist Churches was Jointee Church near Goodview which was recorded as early as Dec. 24, 1771. The exact location of this church cannot be determined today.

Morgans Baptist Church near Moneta is regarded as the oldest established Baptist Church. It was organized in 1771 as Turner’s Meeting House in a log building near Stone Mountain. It was later moved to its present location, renamed Goose Creek Church and in 1884 was named Morgans.

The first Baptist organization in Bedford dates to 1800. One of the summer assemblies of the Baptist denomination in Virginia is that of “Eagle Eyrie,” located on Locke Mountain near Boonsboro. Originally known as “Pebbleton,” its history dates to 1754.

In 1784 Bedford County was organized as the Bedford Circuit of the Methodist Church. In 1788, Francis Asbury, one of the first Methodist bishops, visited in the county.

In 1874 the first mass was conducted in Bedford for those of the Catholic faith and in 1875 the present St. Mary’s Catholic Church was dedicated. The members of the church have just launched a drive for a new $65,000 edifice in Bedford.

The church of the Brethren dates to the organization in 1893 of Saunders Grove Church. Other churches are located at Antioch, Jeter’s Chapel, Meadow’s Chapel and Terrace View.

The Rev. I. N. H. Beahm (1859-1950), one of the leading Brethren ministers, made his home in Bedford. A co-founder of Daleville College, he was president ol several educational institutions in the United States before settling to full-time ministerial work.

In 1900 William Robert Saunders and family of Franklin County came to Bedford County and were the leaders in the organization of the disciples of Christ (Christian Church) here. The present building was dedicated in November, 1924.

Probably the earliest religious group active in the county were the Society of Friends (Quakers). It was known in 1756 that there was a working group in the county, thus their origin was about the time of the county’s formation. Their first location was known as Goose Creek Meeting House on Difficult Creek, now the site of Quaker Baptist Church, and another, known as Upper Goose Creek Meeting House, was located near Montvale, the exact location not being known today.

Other denominations have been active in recent years in the county. They are the Church of God which has a church in Bedford, one near Moneta and one near Leesville; the Pentecostal Holiness, with a church in Bedford and one at Cool Springs; and the Church of Prophecy whose state camp ground is located on the Huddleston-Leesville highway.

The Primitive Baptist denomination which was active in past years, has only two churches left today, Fairview Church near Huddleston and one in Stewartsville.

In addition to the religious denominations work in the county, the county has produced many outstanding religious leaders.

Although there is no Mormon organization (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) in the county, the fourth presiding bishop of the church, William Bowker Preston (1830-1908) was from the county. He was named presiding bishop of the church April 6, 1884, and was relived in 1907 due to his health. Bishop Preston eight years in the Utah Territorial Legislature, spent four years in England in Mormon church work and was the founder of the Wyoming settlement which was named Bedford.

Bishop Nicholas Hammer Cobbs (1795-1861) was one of the early leaders of the Episcopal Church, both in Virginia and Alabama.

Among the early leaders of the Baptist denomination was Dr. Jeremiah Bell Jeter (1802-1880) who was one of the leaders in the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Methodist have two distinguished men as native sons of Bedford County, Bishop James Hervey Otey (1800-1863) and Bishop John Early (1876-1873). Bishop Otey was one of the founders of the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn.; Bishop Early was one of the founders of Randolph-Macon College and was active in the division of the Methodist Church.

Dr. John Holt Rice (1777-1831) of the Presbyterian denomination was one of the founders of Union Theological Seminary at Hampden-Sydney, now located in Richmond.

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Famous Hawaiian Musician Buried in Bedford County
Typed as Written

In the 1940s one of the most widely known and popular dance bands in the country was an Hawaiian orchestra featured in the Hawaiian Room of the Hotel Lexington at Lexington Avenue and 48th Street in New York City.

This orchestra was directed by Lani McIntire, a native of Hawaii, one of the America’s music leaders of that period. He is buried in Bedford County.

A stroll through the cemetery at Bethlehem United Methodist Church in Moneta would find a gravemarker simply inscribed

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{Lani} & \text{Helen} \\
\text{Dec. 15, 1904} & \text{Apr. 5, 1907} \\
\text{June 16, 1951} & \\
\end{array}
\]

which is the burial place for this musician from the mid-Pacific.

Mr. McIntire was born in Honolulu, and educated at the Kamehameha School for Boys in that city.

Shortly after graduation he joined the U. S. Navy after World War One and for two years played a saxophone in the U. S. Navy Band. He mastered the Hawaiian instruments and became a professional singer and master of ceremonies with his own orchestra.

He worked at a Hollywood, Calif., night club, furnished atmosphere music for four years during filming of silent movies and had bookings at leading hotels and broadcast with Paul Whiteman’s orchestra.

He directed his own Hawaiian orchestra for 15 years and before that toured the states with a quartet for some ten years. He appeared in the motion picture “Waikiki Wedding” and was booked at the Lexington Hotel the last nine years of his life.

He was a composer, conductor, arranger, singer and guitarist. Some of his songs were “The One Rose Left in My Heart,” “Sweet Little Sweetheart,” “Sweet Hawaiian Charms,” “Hearts Are Never Blue in Kalua,” “So Long But Not For Long,” “Hilo Serenade,” “My Little Red Rose,” “I Picked a Flower in Hawaii,” “Next Door to Heaven” and “Aloha Hawaii, Aloha.”

He died of a heart attack in his sleep June 16, 1951, at his apartment in the Elwood Hotel in New York City. He had suffered an earlier attack; for several years he had been receiving treatment for a heart ailment.

Funeral services were conducted June 19 in New York City. A service was conducted June 21 by the Rev. P. T. Harman, pastor of West Lynchburg Baptist Church, from the Fauber Funeral Home chapel in Lynchburg followed by burial in the Bethlehem United Methodist Church cemetery on Route 122 south of Moneta.

Bedford Soldier Wins Purple Heart

This article is from a World War II Scrapbook kept by Dr. Nellie Lester. The article is from an unknown newspaper and is typed as written.

John V. (Jack) Harris, Jr., with the American forces which landed in France early in June, has been awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in action and is now recovering at a hospital in England, according to a letter received by his father last Saturday. The citation itself was not enclosed but will be sent later, so the exact nature of the service for which it was awarded is not known.

Private Harris, who is a member of the military police corps, wrote two weeks ago stating that he had had a “slight accident” and was back in England. Through one of those peculiar coincidences which crop up every now and then the nature of this “accident” became known to the soldiers family before his last letter arrived, Rev. S. M. Query, formerly of Montvale, being the medium. He is an army chaplain attached to the American hospital service in England and in a letter to his wife, the former Miss Estelle Luck, he said he had run across only one Bedford man among the wounded and that was Jack Harris. Mrs. Query passed the news along to the Harris family.

In the letter to his father received Saturday Private Harris said in part:

Just a few lines to let you know I am O.K. I gave my Purple Heart to a lady at the Red Cross and asked her to send it to you. I want you to take good care of it for me. I don’t want anymore or anything that looks like it—they are too hard to get, but I want to keep this one. I would like to tell you more, but you will have to wait until I get home. About all I want now is another German Lugar pistol to match the one I already have.

What do you think of the war and of the way us boys have got these super-men on the run? I know you people are keeping up with us on the map. I believe the Russians are going to beat us into Germany, but when we meet them (the Russians) there is going to be some good time by all.

In your next letter let me know how many boys in old Company A were lost in the landing and since. That outfit sure made a name for itself during the invasion. I saw a number of boys from my old outfit not long ago, but lost touch when I had to return to England.

Please grease my rifle and pistol with good oil every month or so and take good care of my car and dogs.

As ever, the old “hell raiser,” and M. P. Rebel.       JACK.

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