

## Winter 2015

Our title is in homage to the title of the first (1838) publication in Jamestown—John Sherwood's *The Farmer's Advocate and Miscellaneous Reporter*.



# The Farmer's Advocate

## And Miscellaneous Reporter

Published Sporadically, But Enthusiastically

### Historic Jamestown Society Officers & Board of Directors

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Gary Pressley  
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#### Staff:

Director Shawn Rogers

For more information go to  
[www.mendenhallhomeplace.com](http://www.mendenhallhomeplace.com)

### *Greetings to the Membership,*

We find ourselves in the middle of winter; and like most winters, we find it brings both challenges and blessings. Challenges come as we bolster ourselves against frigid temperatures, frozen pipes, and balky autos. The cloudy, rainy days bless us with water to refill our diminishing water table before the heat of summer.

Historic Jamestown Society moves through its “seasons” in much the same way. We are challenged on many fronts as we seek to interpret and preserve area history and its artifacts. We are blessed by having a fine Director and cheerful, supportive volunteers who give freely of their time, talents, and skills to achieve the goals of the Society.

This promises to be a busy year as we plan to expand our program areas to include school outreach and to provide more programs of interest to our adult community. The first of these programs is one developed cooperatively by Historic Jamestown Society and Friends of Jamestown Public Library. It will explore early gold mining activity in the Jamestown area during the 1800s. The program, presented on February 21, will feature roundtable discussion by knowledgeable members of the community as well as interesting exhibits. We hope you will help to fill Jamestown Town Hall from 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM that Saturday to learn more about Jamestown's Gold Rush.

Jane Wade, our Historic Jamestown Society Vice President, will continue publishing *The Farmer's Advocate* this year; and I will send you quarterly newsletters from the President's desk. We hope you will stop by Mendenhall Homeplace occasionally to see what is happening. Our Director, Shawn Rogers, will be giving updates concerning on-going projects resulting from our recent fire as well as those that are being developed as he continues to research the history of the house and its original interior decor. Stay tuned!

Peace to each of you,  
Shirley Haworth, President  
Historic Jamestown Society

# From the Desk of the Director

February 2, 2015

The number of guests passing through the door of the Mendenhall House have dropped as quickly as the mercury in our thermometers. However, there is quite a bit of work to be done at the old homeplace, beyond the work that has already begun on the Bank Barn. Just last week the Guilford County Planning Office and the Guilford County Historic Preservation Committee approved a Certificate of Appropriateness request for a number of different projects, including: the repair/replacement of rotted siding and gutters on the Museum Building and Mendenhall House, the painting of the New Parlor in the Mendenhall House and the installation of handles for the stairs adjoining the Gathering Room, the restoration of the home's historic stone walk at the entrance, the removal of a diseased and dying Maple tree, and various work at the Madison Lindsay House, such as the restoration of the burned floor of the Old Hall Room, the replacement of the building's rusted out tin roof, and the replacement of rotted siding. Speaking of the Madison Lindsay roof, Historic Jamestown Society is only \$390.00 away from reaching its \$2,340.00 contribution for the Marion Stedman Covington Foundation Grant! Thank you for your support! I am also happy to report that the Town of Jamestown has kindly given Historic Jamestown Society permission to use any remaining funds from the grant issued for barn repairs for other capital projects at Mendenhall Homeplace.

The good news regarding grants doesn't stop there. The Guilford County Commissioners, the Guilford County Planning Office, and the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission have agreed to support Historic Jamestown Society's application for a Federal Preservation Fund Matching Grant! As mentioned in the last edition of the Farmer's Advocate, this grant would support major masonry repairs in the chimney stacks and walls of the Mendenhall House. Historic Jamestown Society will be the first applicant for this grant through the Guilford County Certified Local Government. The grant application has been submitted, and awards will be announced sometime in March. Keep your fingers crossed!

Our membership drive has been a terrific success, thus far. \$3,680.00 in membership contributions have been collected to date, and Historic Jamestown Society now boasts a total of 125 members! In addition, members of the Jamestown community have continued to share historically significant stories and objects with Mendenhall Homeplace. Volunteers, of course, are the ones who allow us to use our varied resources to preserve and interpret the rich history of our community and Mendenhall Homeplace. The significance of their contributions is far greater than any assigned monetary value.

To all who have played a role in the continued success of Mendenhall Homeplace, THANK YOU!

Sincerely,  
Shawn Rogers  
Director, Mendenhall Homeplace

P.S. Let's keep the ball rolling! If you are interested in working as a volunteer, please give me a call, or drop me a line.  
336.454.3819  
director@mendenhallplantation.org

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

**1:00-4:00 pm, February 21, 2015...**

*Gold Mining in Jamestown  
Jamestown Town Hall*

## ***Wish List of Needed Items for the Mendenhall Homeplace:***

Black trash bags (can liners and contractor bags)  
Box shovel  
Spade  
Respirator mask (charcoal filters)  
Paint scrapers  
Drop cloths

# EAST JAMESTOWN OR "THE DEPOT"

Written by H. Clay Briggs

Published in *The High Point Enterprise* October 20, 1940

I have seen a number of articles about Old Jamestown, but never anything about East Jamestown or "The Depot," as it was always called until long after I was a grown man. I am going to describe it at the beginning of the Civil War.

I was born there in 1858 and left there in 1862 when not quite four years old. I remember every house and who lived there. First, on the east side of the river was the Isaac Potter House, a part of which is still there.

Next, on the south side of the railroad was the Miller's house, still standing occupied by Frank Holton then and until about 1884, I think. Next, on the right, was Dr. S. G. Coffin's place, now known as the Dan Moore place.

Next on the right, was the McConnell store building. Mr. J. M. Wharton ran the store for the owner until he went to the war.

Next was my father's house, B. F. Briggs, which stood about where the back end of George Mathew's garage now stands.

Next was Next was the Briggs three-story Buggy, Wood, and Paint Shop, where the McMurray house stands. Across the road from my father's house was the Briggs-Smith Shop where they did the iron work on the buggies.

Next above the wood shop was the rambling three-story house of Henry M. Briggs who was my father's uncle. Next, was a log cabin on the Johnson lot that belonged to Uncle Henry.

Next was a house where J. H. Smith's house now stands, occupied by a man by the name of Flack, his wife, and a daughter whose name was Ida, who was about my age. We played together until we were nearly four years old.

In January, 1865, while on our way to Indiana, I saw Ida Flack on the in Knoxville, Tennessee. I knew her and she knew me, much to the astonishment of our mothers. We were then just over six years old, and it had been about two and one-half years since we had seen each other. I relate this to show that I had a good memory for names, places, and faces.

Next above Flack's on the left, where the Ridge house now stands, was a small house, and between it and where Mrs. Foscue lives was a Smith Shop, owned by Ab McClintock. Next above Flack's on the corner, was the Sapp house that always looked like a jail. It was planked up and down and painted brown.

Across the corner, was the John Freeman house, now known as the John R. Ragsdale place. Freeman ran a school

At Flint Hill Academy, which stood between the Methodist Church and Oscar Bundy's house.

Down where J. S. Ragsdale's house now stands, was the home of William H. Reece who was Depot Agent during the War.

Over on the hill, south of the Depot was a house belonging to Dr. Coffin. A man by the name of Frank Patterson and his wife, Betsy, lived there. They used to work for my parents.

After the death of my father in the spring of 1864, my mother, her sister, and an aunt started to Indiana in October, 1864, in wagons. After untold hardships and the loss of our horses and wagons, and everything else except the clothes we had on and our money, which they had in belts around their waists, we arrived in Indiana the fourth of March, 1865. After staying there eight months, we came back to North Carolina, arriving in Jamestown in the night. I was the first to notice that my father's house had been moved. Harmon Bundy had moved it over in the grove where Vickery's now stands. That was the only change that had been made.

The next day after we got to Jamestown I think nearly every person in the village came to see us. I knew every one of them; my older brother, only a few.

There were but few changes there for several years. John Freeman moved away, and Dr. Hoover took his place. Dr. Coffin, about 1870, moved to Old Jamestown, and later to High Point, where he died several years later. Mr. Reece moved to Greensboro, and in moving, he took pneumonia and died. Henry Briggs died in 1873, and now there is not a single descendent of any of the old families there except Mrs. Lucy Ragsdale and her children. She is the grand-daughter of Dr. Coffin.

Now there are only three people living who were born at the Depot prior to the War: Mrs. Ada Coffin Ragan, her sister, Mrs. Laura Coffin Kirkman (Mrs. W.F. Kirkman), and myself.



*Shubal Coffin's second house, also called the Dan Moore place in this article.*

# Lore from the Mine

*In 1975, Lucy Washington and Laura Powell taped an interview with Mrs. Ethel Coltrane. She had accompanied them on a car trip of the Deep River mine and surrounding areas.*

Born in 1893, she was one of nine children who grew up at the Deep River Mine with her father and mother Allred and grandparents. The Allreds came from England. Her grandfather was working in the mine when the Civil War started and he left the mine then and joined the Navy in Wilmington. "They took the smallpox on that boat and they got so poor they made soup for one solid week out of a chicken wing." Mrs. Allred continued, "When the war was over he walked back and he wore out his shoes and he made himself some out of an old bed quilt."

The old "rock house" which stands in the woods near the intersection of Kivett Drive and I-85 (now restored and operated as Castle McCulloch) once housed the rock engine which ground gold ore and the smelting furnaces which melted the gold from the crushed ore. It was built with slave labor supervised by a rock mason by the name of Eleizer Kersey.



The great square smokestack of this kiln still towers, seeming as firm as the day it was built, some 75 feet in the air. Mrs. Coltrane said, "When they got it finished they dared any woman in the community to climb up and walk around the top...if she did they would give her a silk dress...and one did, but I don't know her name. She went up there and walked around it...75 feet in the air!"

It was from a window in the rock house that an angry foreman threw a young Negro slave many years ago. The boy landed on a rock and there are reddish stains on that rock today. Mrs. Coltrane continued, "You know they say blood will never wash off. You ever hear that? I believe it because Grandpa told me and my Grandpa didn't tell lies."