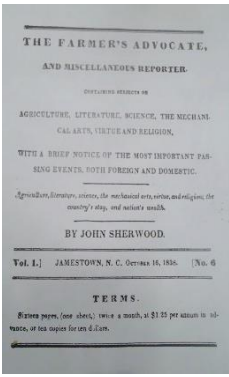


Fall 2016

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

Historic Jamestown Society, Inc.

Published Sporadically, But Enthusiastically

November 2016

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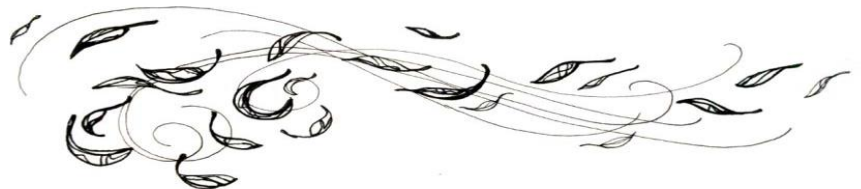
Greetings to the Membership

It is the time of year for family get-togethers as we approach Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's. Please take the time to talk to your older relatives about what they remember growing up. Maybe they can tell you about other relatives that have passed away. It is important to talk to our children about family history and what we remember growing up as well.

Unfortunately I never got to meet my maternal grandparents. I have pictures of them, but no memories. I never asked my mother what it was like growing up in the depression in Chatham and Orange counties. I really wish I had. I do have vague recollections of my mother's father's family reunions when I was very young. I remember sack races and lots of food on my great-uncle's farm in Orange County, NC.

All of us get involved in other things especially when we are young and our children are young. Please pass down to your children and grandchildren your memories. Have a blessed Holiday Season.

Jane Walker Payne, President
Historic Jamestown Society



From the Director's Desk

Historic Preservation: It's about more than old buildings and artifacts.

Shawn M. Rogers, Mendenhall Homeplace Director

Nearly every time someone asks me what I do for a living, my answer elicits comments about how neat it must be to work with such old buildings and “things.” Boy, is it! To be near the relics of history, the literal residue of history, is something that is very meaningful and significant to me. These “things,” however, are not significant merely because they are old or even beautiful. To me, the power of their appeal and relevance is found within their relationship and association with history itself. In that way, they truly are a part of history.

Heritage Interpretation: The Heart of Preserving and Sharing History

Old, interesting things devoid of any apparent connection to meaningful history are often perceived simply as old, interesting things. That is why heritage interpretation plays such a key role in preserving and sharing our history. According to Freeman Tilden, the “father” of modern heritage interpretation:

“Heritage interpretation is an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.” Freeman Tilden

To put it plainly- history isn't much without a story, and a story isn't very much without meaningful significance.

Preserving History: Keeping and Sharing the Stories of History

One of the best ways to learn about history is to go directly to the source – the people who actually lived it. In the coming months you will learn more about Historic Jamestown Society's ongoing efforts to collect and preserve the stories of Jamestown and the surrounding communities by way of a new oral history project. Historic Jamestown Society will also be actively recruiting and training volunteer heritage interpreters/tour guides to help the guests of Mendenhall Homeplace discover the rich history of our community.

We Need Your Help!

If you, or someone you know, would like to share memories of Jamestown, or if you are interested in helping Mendenhall Homeplace share the significant history of our community with neighbors and friends in meaningful and entertaining ways, please feel free to contact me.

Please remember, we not only preserve things, we preserve and share history. Won't you help us?

Shawn Rogers

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Dates to Remember

Saturday, November 5, 2016 – Treasure Sale at the Mendenhall Homeplace, 8:00 am – 12:00. Members are invited to bring items to be donated to the sale, with price tags attached, that morning or the week before...and return to shop.

Thursday, December 8, 2016 – A very special Christmas Candlelight Tour of three of the unique historic buildings of Jamestown will be held at 4:30-6:30 pm. Featured will be the Mendenhall Homeplace, the Madison Lindsay House, and the adjacent Coffin-Hay Home. Each home will feature beautiful period decorations. The Mendenhall Home will have simple, natural decorations in keeping with the

Quaker family who lived there, with the exception of the “New Parlor” which was added in the early Victorian period. This room will feature Victorian-era decorations, which really set the style for many of our current Christmas decorations. The Madison Lindsay House will feature a children's tree decorated in the fashion of child-made decorations from an era of simple pleasures and not much money to be paid for Christmas decorations. The Coffin-Hay home will feature decorations from three generations of the family.

Sunday, December 11, 2016—3:00 pm. The Historic Jamestown Society Annual Meeting. Plans are still being made, so stay “tuned” for further information.

Skeleton Didn't Stay in the Grave

While there are no accounts of any ghostly appearances coming from it, if ever there were reason for hauntings, the following story would provide one.

In a letter postdated June 21, 1938, a prominent local citizen repeated the story that had been related to him by the participants. Two medical students, Drs. John W. Tomlinson and Frank Wright, were studying under Dr. Lane Robbins here in Jamestown, about 1856-58.

Eager to secure a cadaver for another avenue of study, they hired a man to dig up the body of a woman who had just been buried in the old churchyard. Accompanying him to supervise, no doubt, the students ended up having to finish the job themselves when the man's shovel sparked fire in a flint rock and he quickly left.

Once the body was secured, they took it to the medical office, located in a small frame building behind what is now known as the Coffin-Tilden House. Finished with their "studies," the devilment seems to have come out in the boys. Asking one of the locals if he wanted some good liquor, they led him into the darkened office, stood him over the body, and then struck a match, expecting him to jump straight up in the air.

Having already heard about their graverobbing, he didn't blink an eye, but calmly asked them, "Where is your liquor?"

After they had finished with the body, they put it in a box and sunk it in the nearby Deep River with the help of their unsurprised friend, where it stayed while they went to Philadelphia to attend the "Lectures."

Having a falling out while they were at the lectures, Dr. Tomlinson wrote back to the friend with instructions to get the box out of the river, dry the bones, crate them up, and ship them to him in High Point.

When the young doctor came back, he wired the bones and kept them as long as he lived.

For a time, the bones were borrowed and set up behind a screen at Dr. Bradshaw's drugstore in High Point, where they were used to scare the unwary. The author of the letter tells that he was in the drugstore one day when a man came in. The druggist was up to his usual pranks and invited the fellow to the back to have a drink.

When the man found a skeleton there instead of refreshment, the letter writer says, "It almost scared him into a fit!"

Asking them where they got the skeleton, the letter writer says he could inform them that the poor, scared fellow had unknowingly been shocked by the last remains of his own aunt.

When they heard that, Dr. Bradshaw told the druggist to put that thing in a box and take it to Dr. Tomlinson right away, which he did.

Whether or not the poor woman's bones ever found their final resting place is not known.



Holt McPherson in his book, *High Pointers of High Point*, c. 1976, adds a particularly gruesome detail to this tale.

"Before putting the skeleton in a box in the river, the head had been removed, skinned, and stuffed with sawdust—red flannel having been used to cover the openings for the eyes and mouth—and placed on a table to dry. Somehow stray dogs got into the office and carried off the head, taking it to the very house where the woman had died. It created a lasting sensation and came near to ending in a law suit."

The following quotation, copied in her own handwriting, was given to the Mendenhall Homeplace in folders from our late beloved member, Joanne Mann. We think it good advice, made more meaningful because it obviously meant something special to her:

Watch an old building with care; guard it as best as you may, and at any cost, from any influence of dilapidation. Count its stones as you would jewels of a crown; set watches about it as if at the gates of a besieged city; band it together with irons when it declines. Do this tenderly, and reverently, and continually, and many a generation will still be born and pass away beneath its shadow.

John Ruskin

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