



The Historian

Norfolk County Historical Society of Chesapeake, Virginia

Spring

May 2024

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Dear Members and Friends,

Spring is here. I look around and see daffodils, tulips, and spring violets emerging from the soil. For me, Spring symbolizes fresh starts and having a clean slate, and most of all, having a positive outlook. As I see the spring flowers and ornamental trees all in bloom it reminds me of our Historical Society. Each Spring we prepare for new exhibits, new guest speakers and meeting new members. I look forward to seeing our organization blossom and grow with each new adventure.

In case you missed it, Mr. Winston Favor, from the Mariner's Museum, gave an excellent presentation on the history of the African-Americans who built the Mariners' Museum & Park at our February membership meeting. His program was fantastic! I am also pleased to report we had a good turnout. Everyone had a good time and loved the refreshments!

In other news, the NCHSC now has an Amazon Storefront, where you can purchase many of our publications. Our storefront is a work in progress, but we are excited to be able to offer our publications to a much wider audience. Our storefront link is in this newsletter and on our web site. Check us out!

Before closing I would like to stress how very important our volunteers are to us as they play a vital role in helping to preserve our Norfolk County history. We are extremely grateful for the wonderful group of men and women who give their time cataloging books, sorting historical papers, researching genealogies and documents for patrons and scouring our community for undocumented gravesites.

Continued next page.

Calendar of Events

May 2024

NCHSC Annual Luncheon

4 May 11:00am-2:00pm

NCHSC Board Meeting via ZOOM

13 May 7:00pm

NCHSC Membership Meeting

19 May 2:00pm

Closed

26 & 27 May

June 2024

Closed

19 Jun

July 2024

Closed

4 & 5 Jul

August 2024

September 2024

Closed

1 & 2 Sep

NCHSC Board Meeting via ZOOM

10 Sep 7:00pm

NCHSC Membership Meeting

15 Sep 2:00pm



President's Letter, *Continued*

Volunteers are the heart of our organization and are always needed! Volunteering is a great way to learn new skills and meet new people. There are many different jobs to do, and we will train you!

If you would like to join our volunteer team, please contact Kay Ziegler, our Wallace Room Manager. So, if you are looking for a new adventure this spring and want to volunteer and get involved in our NCHSC activities please give Kay or myself a call. We'd love to have you join us!

Happy Spring to All!

Robert B. Hitchings, NCHSC President

Robert Hitchings to Speak at May Membership Meeting

Join us for our membership meeting on May 19, 2024, at 2:00pm at the Chesapeake Central Library. Our speaker will be our own President and Archivist/Historian, Robert Hitchings, who will be presenting the story of the "Baroness of Norfolk."

Born Mary Ludlow in Norfolk in 1826, she and her brother were orphaned at a young age. Her marriage to her childhood sweetheart, Dr. Henry Selden, ended tragically when he and two of their three children died during the Yellow Fever epidemic. Her third child died in 1861. Learn about Mary Ludlow Selden's fascinating life and how she gained the title "Baroness Zollikofer-Altenklingen of Austria Hungary."

Robert Hitchings joined the NCHSC in 2015 as Archivist/Historian after managing the Sargeant Memorial Room in Norfolk. As NCHSC Archivist/Historian, Robert directs the development and preservation of our Wallace Room Collection and ensures that we remain focused on our mission of preserving and sharing our local history. As NCHSC President, Robert participates in all operations from fundraising and event support to administration and organizational activities.



Photo of Baroness Zollikofer-Altenklingen of Austria Hungary, Courtesy of Robert Hitchings

Be sure to join us and bring a friend! As always, light refreshments will be served.

Find NCHSC publications for sale at our storefront on Amazon.com!

<https://www.amazon.com/s?me=A2NZFQ9MGEZ94B&marketplaceID=ATVPDKIKX0DER>

How Technology and YOU Help the NCHSC

By Kay Ziegler,
NCHSC Board Member and Wallace Room Manager

When our volunteers finished our book *Tombstone Inscriptions and Research of Norfolk County and the City of Chesapeake, Virginia* in 2022, we left it with the statement that our work would never be completed. Recently, we posted on our website and Facebook page that the Norfolk County Historical Society of Chesapeake, VA is committed to the research of existing cemeteries and to locating undocumented cemeteries. We asked for your help by contacting us via message, email, or phone if you knew of any potentially undocumented graves and cemeteries. We said we would be happy to document your find and research the family.

Since that post was made, we received lots of feedback leading to several additions to existing cemeteries and to whole new cemeteries that were not documented until now. Needless to say, Susan Ward Fleming and I are working on an addendum to *Tombstone Inscriptions* and continue to look for undocumented graves.

If you have any information that can lead us to possible non-documented grave sites, please email us at: nchs.wallaceroom@gmail.com or phone us at 757-382-8408.



"Cemetery Sleuth" Kay Ziegler Stands Near the Wallace Family Gravesite in Deep Creek
Photo by Suzy Ward Fleming

Don't Forget Your Annual Dues!

Annual membership dues are due May 31, 2024. Annual membership is \$20 per person/\$30 per couple, and lifetime membership is \$200 per person. Your membership dues allow us to offer quality educational programs and materials for the coming year, so don't forget your annual dues!

Grimes Gravesite Found

By Suzy Ward Fleming,
NCHSC Board Member and Wallace Room Volunteer

Kay Ziegler and I had been searching for an unknown cemetery in the 4200 block of Ballahack Rd. We had heard about this cemetery though library patrons, Jean Pfaehler and her niece Joyce Hartman. They had both seen evidence of a cemetery (grave fragments). Joyce was kind enough to meet us on site in February to show us what she had found.



Stones of Daniel and Mary Grimes

The cemetery was located in a farmer's field and the grave fragments had been moved into a pile on the outskirts for safe keeping. While we were putting the pieces of the stone together the next-door neighbor came to the fence to chat. He told us how his ex-wife had taken two stones from the field about ten years ago and he was willing to return them to the field. The stones had been damaged by farming equipment. I asked for permission to come on his property and photograph the stones. I would never encourage someone to move gravestones; however, I do believe that this history would have been lost if the stones had remained in the field.

The stones were for Daniel Grimes born in 1800 and died November 1857 and his wife Mary Grimes born in 1800 and died February 16, 1854. I was able to verify in the Virginia Death and Burial Index that they both had died of pleurisy, a disease of the lungs. My research indicates that there were no children born of the marriage. Mary died in February and on July 20, 1854, Daniel married Miss Mary Creekmur, daughter of Thomas and Mary Creekmur. His will was probated on November 24, 1857, at the courthouse, naming his heirs as his wife, Mary and niece, Ruth Lynch.

Old Photos of Norfolk County, Virginia – 100 Years Ago



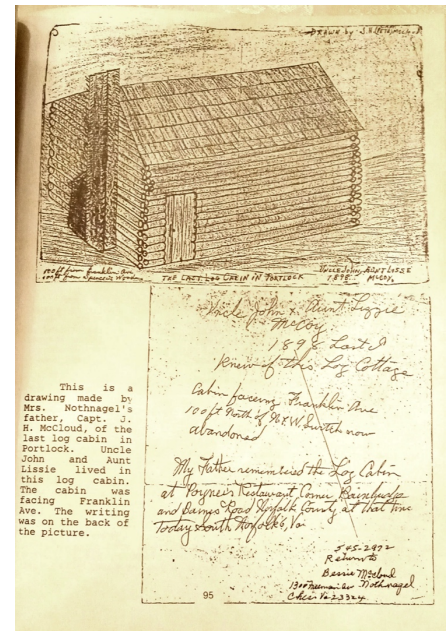
A report in the 1924 *Norfolk and Portsmouth City Directory* touting Norfolk County's industrial and agricultural resources, includes this photograph of a "corn club boy" and his harvest. Boys' Corn Clubs began around 1900 in public schools and were sponsored by local organizations to provide agricultural education to farmers-to-be. Corn Club members competed in growing corn on one square acre of land. This young Corn Club member in Norfolk County harvested 209 bushels of corn in 1924 from his single acre of land to achieve a Corn Club record.

The Last Log Cabin in Portlock

By Robert B. Hitchings,
NCHSC President and Historian/ Archivist

While searching through some items in our Wallace Room Collection, I came across a book called *The Bucktrout Swamp*. The book was put together in 1989 by first through sixth grade students at Greenbrier Elementary School in Chesapeake. It included a drawing dated 1898 by Captain J. H. McCloud of the last existing log cabin in Portlock. The cabin belonged to John and Lizzie McCoy and faced Franklin Avenue.

Log cabins were everywhere in Norfolk County many years ago. Now, however, only one log cabin is left -- the Ruritan Club headquarters. It is behind Fire Station #8 on George Washington Highway in Deep Creek.



1898 Drawing of Log Cabin in Portlock
from *The Bucktrout Swamp*

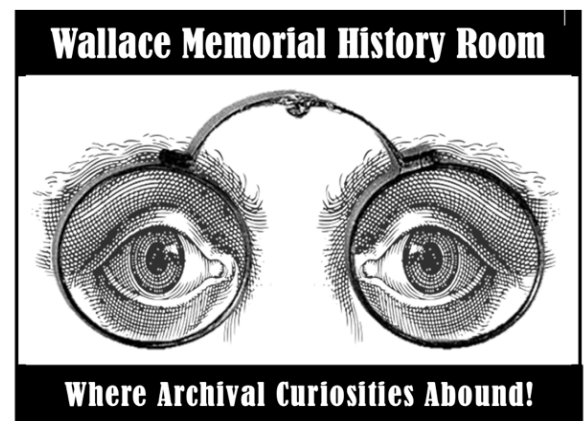
Wallace Memorial History Room: A Collection of Archival Curiosities

By P. S. Vredenburg,
NCHSC Board Member and Wallace Room Volunteer

Our Wallace Room Collection offers so many stories, and we are finally getting around to sharing some of them with you! We'll be showing you "What's in the Wallace Room?" in a series of Facebook posts about items in our collection.

Housing historical records and artifacts from the time of the indigenous peoples of southeast Virginia to the present-day City of Chesapeake, our collection includes early Virginia court records, Revolutionary War pension papers, Civil War diaries and letters, canal designs, shipbuilding plans, maps, photos, military uniforms, and more! The Wallace Room offers a rich resource for understanding our local stories of life in Norfolk County, as well as our contributions to our nation's history.

Join us on Facebook to see what we are sharing from our collection!



Did You Know?

By Robert B. Hitchings,
NCHSC President & Historian/ Archivist

On January 3, 1860, *The Day Book*, a local newspaper of Norfolk, Virginia, reported that a group of cranberry farmers had come to visit the Great Dismal Swamp to see whether the swamp would be a suitable place to grow cranberries. The newspaper *Barnstable Patriot* said, "The cranberry culture yields almost fabulous profit, no man can deny; and it seems to be almost universally admitted that no cranberry's equal in quality to those of Cape Cod. "

"Whether this Cape Cod party came down or not, we are grateful to the state (Massachusetts) that there is no doubt, but a large crop will be raised on the marsh lands adjacent to us, which in a year or two will swell up to an enormous quantity. Our Norfolk County climate, soil, and the Dismal Swamp, is particularly adapted to the cultivation of this article, and there is no doubt in the world, there is an immense deal of money in the trade when it is once started."

Unfortunately, within a year the Civil War would start and thus the cranberry was never grown in the Dismal Swamp. However, if there is anyone who might still be interested in the cranberry business and thinks it could be profitable here in Chesapeake, here's your chance to become a cranberry entrepreneur!

Be a Part of History... Volunteer!

Do you have a passion for history or genealogy, or both? We invite you to join us in our mission to preserve and share the history of Chesapeake, South Norfolk, and Norfolk County. Our volunteers help plan and coordinate events, perform research, and organize and preserve our collection. When

you volunteer, you become part of our historical record.



You don't need archival expertise or a deep knowledge of local history to help us. You just need to be willing to learn. Contact us for an orientation tour. Come see what we do and how you can help!

Are you interested in being part of our leadership team? The NCHSC has several

open seats on our NCHSC Board of Directors. To qualify, you must be an NCHSC member in good standing and be willing to take an active role in our committees and activities. Contact us via phone or email.