



Farmville - Prince Edward Historical Society

*P.O. Box 546
Farmville, Virginia 23901*

September, 2008



Farmville United Methodist Church And Its Stained-Glass Windows

By Daphne Mason

**Tuesday, September 16, 2008
7:00 p.m.**

***Note change in location*
Farmville United Methodist Church**

Guests Always Welcomed

Photos by Gene Henley
Courtesy of *Prince Edward County, Virginia Heritage*
1754-2008



History of Farmville United Methodist Church

The history of Farmville United Methodist Church has deep roots in Methodism in Prince Edward County. Farmville was part of a preaching appointment that dated back to 1798.

Before 1831, a meetinghouse at the corner of Randolph and High Streets accommodated worshipers favoring the Methodist doctrine, and in 1833, the Methodist Church was formally established.

The "Great Revival of 1837," one of the largest of the time, caused Main Street stores to close and saw many converted. The need for a new church soon became apparent. Construction began in 1839, and the Methodist Church in Farmville was completed in 1840. The church was built of brick with "a fine central steeple giving it a noble appearance."

An interesting sidebar to the church story was the ornate medallion centerpiece in the ceiling. The architect advised the trustees to omit the centerpiece because the mold required 400 pounds of beeswax.

Mrs. Pleasant Hubbard, who lived in the western part of the county, decided the church should have the centerpiece. Traveling on her husband's horse, she visited every house in the surrounding territory, and in a few days, collected the wax. The centerpiece is still on display in the church school building as a memorial to Mrs. Hubbard.

The church was completed in time for the 1840 Virginia Annual Conference, the only meeting of the Conference held in Farmville.

In 1842, another large revival added "a great many souls" to the church; 118 were named in 1846.

During that time church members were held strictly accountable. Old church ledgers bear such notations as: "expelled for dancing," "expelled for intemperance," or "withdrawn in preference to standing trial."

Nevertheless, the church continued to grow, and again a larger building was needed. Work on the present-day church began in 1907, with the first service held in May 1908. A two-story educational facility adjoining the church was also added.

Forty years later when major defects were discovered in the roof during an expansion, a complete renovation was planned. A basement was excavated underneath the sanctuary to provide a fellowship room, kitchen and offices. The new building was dedicated in June 1953.

In 1959 work on an education building with 10 classrooms, social hall, kitchen, and storage rooms on three floors was started. It was completed in 1963.

The Rev. Elmer Hassell summed up the church mission in his 1967 history; "The church is an integral part of the life of Farmville. Its leaders are among the town's most prominent and successful people, practicing their faith on Every Street. May it ever be said: surely the Lord is in this place."

In 2007, under the leadership of the Rev. Sylvia S. Meadows and the Rev. Amy Beth Houglund, Farmville UMC continues to strive to fulfill its mission statement: "Every member in ministry for Jesus Christ; loving God and our neighbors."

Courtesy of *Prince Edward County Virginia Heritage 1754-2008*, submitter Marge Swayne

www.farmville-umc.org

This Day in September in Prince Edward County History

- 9-1-1775** Williamsburg newspaper carries first advertisement for new college for men to open sometime that fall in Prince Edward
- 9-1-1902** 30 cars of processed tobacco leave for Norway
- 9-1-1891** Farmville Silver Band organized
- 9-2-1964** County's public school system reopens as an integrated system, after being closed for five years
- 9-3-1831** Union Seminary founder John Holt Rice dies
- 9-3-1906** The first brick of the Methodist church was laid in northwest corner
- 9-4-1919** Farmville turns out to welcome its returning World War I veterans
- 9-5-1898** Union Theological Seminary moves to Richmond
- 9-5-1935** Hurricane-spawned tornado damages trees and buildings at Hampden-Sydney and Kingsville
- 9-6-1893** Noted Negro, Goliath Armistead died
- 9-6-1933** Virginia Dark-Fired Tobacco Warehousemen's Association organized at Planters Warehouse
- 9-6-1933** Farmville Council approves sale of "near beer" (3.2% alcohol)
- 9-7-1897** Norfolk & Western Railroad fined by Mayor Burton for excessive speed in town
- 9-9-1885** Opera House contracted to be built by Burton and Davis
- 9-11-1934** Farmville's ABC store opened
- 9-13-1944** Honor Roll of World War II veterans unveiled on Courthouse lawn
- 9-15-1907** Prof. August Schemmel, opens Farmville's Conservatory of Music
- 9-17-1862** Prominent county lawyer J. T. Thornton is mortally wounded in battle at Sharpsburg, Maryland
- 9-20-1809** Missouri governor and Confederate Major General Sterling Price born near Hampden-Sydney
- 9-22-1865** High Bridge reopens to regular traffic five months after being burned during the retreat
- 9-22-1914** County voters approve (640-205) request for statewide Prohibition
- 9-23-1890** After a bitterly contested election, Republican Party seats black educator J. M. Langston as this district's U.S. Congressman
- 9-23-1923** Birth of county's famed soldier and educator, Lt. Gen. Samuel V. Wilson
- 9-24-1776** Buffalo Presbyterian Church Session adopts "Petition for Religious Liberty" which was eventually sent to Virginia House of Delegates
- 9-24-1890** Tobacconist, J.W. Dunnington, born
- 9-25-1869** Rev. Daniel Witt baptizes over forty people in Miller's mill pond
- 9-25-1922** Charles Edward Burrell published *A History of Prince Edward County, Virginia from its Formation in 1753, to the Present*
- 9-25-1912** Fire Prevention Bureau meets and Farmville businesses pass inspection
- 9-28-1728** First known land grant to settler in Prince Edward area goes to Richard Jarvis, Jr., for property along the Bush River
- 9-28-1917** *Birth of a Nation* plays at the Normal School auditorium
- 9-28-1955** The old armory on Main Street was sold at auction for \$45,000
- 9-30-1933** County voters approve bond issue to build present courthouse

October and November Meetings

On Tuesday, October 21, Dr. William Thompson will present a timely program about the ghosts of Hampden-Sydney College.

In November, the Society will hold its annual business session.

