



Farmville - Prince Edward Historical Society

P.O. Box 546

Farmville, Virginia 23901

February, 2009

What is this thingamajig?



Show & Tell

Bring something old, unusual,
or a conversation piece

Tuesday, February 17, 2009
7:00 p.m.

PE Co Agricultural Center
Hwy 15 South to 100 Dominion Drive
Beside Water Tower, next to Lowe's

Board Meets at 6:00 p.m.

Randolph Warehouse, Mill & First Street

The Randolph Warehouse, located on the bank of the Appomattox River at Mill & First Street, is this month's featured site from the Farmville walking tour.

In January of 1798 the Virginia General Assembly passed an act providing for inspection of tobacco on lands near Rutledge's Bridge owned by Judith Randolph. John Woodson's survey of that same year shows warehouse grounds on the Appomattox River at the site of the Randolph "Old" Warehouse, now occupied by Charley's Waterfront Café and part of Greenfront Furniture Company.

A tobacco inspector's duties included the preparation of the manifest for transportation, which included the farmer's name, name of the bateau skipper or wagon driver, marks (grades), numbers, weights, and name of warehouse. In the early days



farmers stripped, tied, and prized their tobacco into hogsheads during the winter months and stored it until the spring and summer months for delivery to the warehouse and shipment to Richmond or Petersburg.

By 1818, the tobacco industry in the port town of Farmville had gotten too big for just Randolph Warehouse. The Farmville Warehouse (Middle Warehouse) was built on lands owned William Venable, Edward Redford, Nathaniel Venable, and Thomas Morton.

By 1823 the first factory for stemming and manufacturing of tobacco appeared owned by James Madison and James D. Wood.

The Appomattox River offered good navigation from Farmville. Forty bateaux operated out of Farmville, carrying a captain and two crewmen along with five to seven tons of cargo, much of which were hogsheads of tobacco. The bateau wharf was directly behind the Randolph Warehouse along that steep river bank. The hogsheads were

rolled down the bank, and some did get away and rolled into the river.

By 1836, Farmville was the fourth largest tobacco market in the state. There were two warehouses and ten factories.

In 1862 the General Hospital of the Confederacy was established in Farmville. The warehouses and factories were quickly converted to carrying for the sick and wounded.

With the end of the Civil War and the beginnings of Reconstruction, in 1870 tobacco inspection resumed in the Farmville warehouses. It quickly became the third largest market in the state and a third warehouse was built in 1875. Known as Planters Warehouse, it has now been converted into Farmville Wholesale Electric.

The 1878 map of Farmville shows that there were 15 tobacco warehouses and factories.

In January of 1898, a fire destroyed all of the original early nineteenth century riverfront warehouses. The brick Randolph (Old) Warehouse structure seen today was built in 1899.

In 1924, J.N. Carter built the present Farmville (Middle) Warehouse structure, which has recently been purchased by the town of Farmville and will be torn down to be replaced by a parking lot.

The three tobacco warehouses were closed in 1976 by the Dark-Fired Tobacco Growers Marketing Association and a single new one opened near Dowdy's Corner as the New Randolph Tobacco Warehouse. All auction warehouses closed for good in January, 2005, as a result of the infamous federal tobacco buyout.



This Day in February in Prince Edward County History

- 2-1-1775** At Slate Hill plantation Hanover Presbytery plans "an Academy in Prince Edward," soon named Hampden-Sydney
- 2-1-1806** Virginia General Assembly appointed commissioners to survey a canal from the Buffalo River to the Roanoke River
- 2-2-1775** Presbytery accepts Peter Johnston's offer of 100 acres of land for the new college, Hampden-Sydney
- 2-2-1924** Tobacco prizery owned by W.P. Gilliam burned
- 2-3-1775** Presbytery appoints Samuel Stanhope Smith rector of the new college, Hampden-Sydney
- 2-3-1803** Gen. Joseph Eggleston Johnston (USA and CSA) born at Longwood plantation
- 2-3-1942** Company G mobilized for service in World War II
- 2-4-1861** John T. Thornton elected county representative to state secession convention
- 2-7-1797** Gov. Beverly Randolph died
- 2-7-1870** Charles Edward Burrell, county historian, born
- 2-8-1825** Virginia General Assembly incorporates Junction Canal Company to build a canal from the Buffalo to the Roanoke River
- 2-8-1845** Virginia General Assembly creates Appomattox County from parts of Prince Edward and three other counties
- 2-8-1944** Charles Edward Burrell, county historian, died
- 2-9-1762** First court record of a passable bridge at Rutledge's Ford--later the site of Farmville
- 2-9-1892** George Richardson appointed postmaster
- 2-10-1918** H.E. Barrow, former mayor, died
- 2-11-1824** Birth of W. H. Ruffner, first president of Farmville State Normal School
- 2-11-1994** State Theater collapses
- 2-12-1871** Decision made to move county seat from Worsham to Farmville
- 2-12-1872** County seat moves from Worsham to Farmville
- 2-13-1786** Patrick Henry refuses membership in U.S. Constitutional Convention
- 2-13-1901** Legislature passes act establishing the Farmville Dispensary
- 2-15-1907** Farmville had Virginia's last execution by hanging before electrocution adopted. Jesse Ruffin and Massey Hill were the condemned
- 2-16-1781** Prince Edward militiamen leave old court house to reinforce Gen. Greene at Dan River
- 2-19-1945** Farmville livestock market conducts first sale
- 2-23-1934** Prince Edward Mills commences operation on site of earlier mill
- 2-25-1952** Oliver Hill argues NAACP's Prince Edward case before U.S. District Court
- 2-26-1900** Farmville Town Council votes against licensing the private sales of intoxicants; all sales to be through an officially sanctioned Dispensary Board
- 2-27-1833** Virginia General Assembly incorporates Farmville as a town
- 2-27-1942** Parking meters came to Main Street
- 2-28-1820** Birth of W. W. H. Thackston, Farmville mayor and dentist, who founded the Virginia Dental Association