



Farmville - Prince Edward Historical Society

P.O. Box 546

Farmville, Virginia 23901

March, 2009

History of Cumberland County

presentation by
Jo D. Smith
Billy Poulston

SPECIAL DATE

Tuesday, March 24, 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.

H.L. Hunley, CSA submarine, subject of program All invited on March 26, 7:00 p.m., Charley's Restaurant

The High Bridge Chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans extend an invitation to the members of the Farmville-Prince Edward Historical Society to attend a program on the Confederate submarine the *H.L. Hunley* on Thursday, March 26, at 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room at Charley's Restaurant.

Jack Marlar, who has served as Chief Technical Advisor for the Hunley Commission, will discuss new findings about the first submarine to sink an enemy vessel in naval warfare history. He will reveal some very romantic stories related to the history of the ship.

This should be an interesting and informative evening as our two organizations share common interests in history.

Paulett-Gills House, 109 High Street

The Paulett-Gills house is among the homes listed on the Farmville Walking Tour. As you drive up High Street from Main Street, you notice the tall, narrow house at the corner of High and Venable Streets. The home bore the address of 114 High Street in 1935.

A small one story building was erected on this site in 1842. The original building was enlarged in 1843 and again in 1858. That same year William H. Chappell sold that building and all land between A.B. Venable's Survey and Charles E. Chappell's alley and Dr. W.W.H. Thackston's stables to Richard Singleton Paulett for \$1,400. The story and a half home was added to and raised to a second story by Paulett.

Upon the death of R.S. Paulett in 1902, Mrs. May Paulett Gills, his grand daughter, bought the home. She and her husband Dr. William "Billy" J. Gills made this their home. After his death, she continued to reside there.

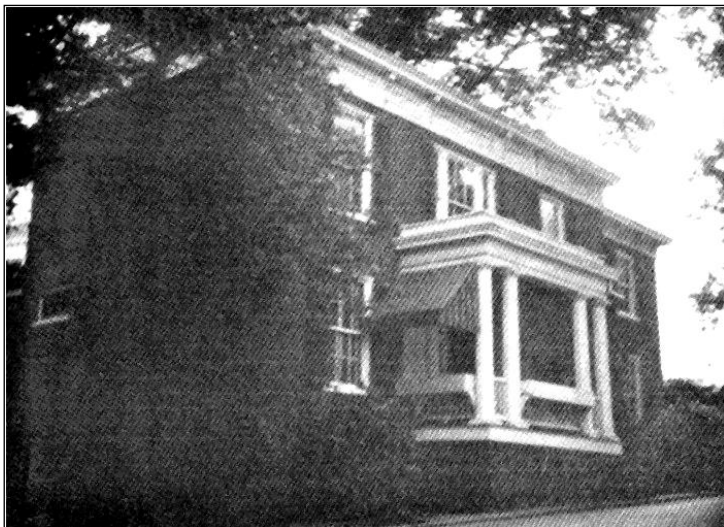


On the 1878 map of Farmville, the home is listed as belonging to R.S. Paulett. Dr. W.W.H. Thackston's home is located on the corner where French Hall is now. Across High Street was the home of Mrs. Blanton, and Mrs. Carrington had a home on the site of Hotel Weyanoke.

Records indicate that in the years around 1909 Dr. William Gills operated the Farmville Hospital in the building next door to his home. Unfortunately this structure has been demolished for a parking lot.

The Farmville Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy held its organizational first meeting in the Paulett-Gills home on March 19, 1896, with 14 members. Mrs. Henry Edmunds was president; Mrs. J.L. White, vice-president; Miss Bettie Johnson, corresponding secretary; Mrs. S.W. Watkins, recording secretary; and Mrs. R.S. Paulett, treasurer.

To the left is a photo of the Paulett home from Herbert Clarence Bradshaw's *History of Prince Edward County, Virginia*, copyright 1955.



R.S. Paulett was born in Charlotte County in 1820. He married Harriett Pearman Clark in 1840. They had six children, among them Captain Samuel W. Paulett (of local Civil War fame) and Henry Clark Paulett (Mrs. Gills' father). Paulett moved to Farmville in 1842 and became a prominent tobacconist. He was president of Planters Bank, of the Farmville Tobacco Board, and of the Board of Stewards of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. He died in 1902.

H.C. Paulett, son of R.S. Paulett, was born in 1849. He was associated with his father in business and for a time was an itinerant Methodist preacher. He died in 1899 in Clifton Forge on his way home from Monroe Red Sulphur Springs. His daughter May Paulett married Dr. William J. Gills.

W.J. Gills was born in 1878 and was educated at Randolph Macon College and the University College of Medicine. He married in 1906. In a 1912 issue of the *Herald*, his card read: "Microscopical Diagnostician and Analytical Chemist' Assistant surgeon 70th Virginia Regiment." He died in 1915.

May's uncle was "the old Reb" Samuel W. Paulett, born 1845. At age 15, he joined the Confederate Company F, 18th Virginia Infantry (Farmville Guard). He was wounded three times, captured and escaped at the Battle of Sayler's Creek by being left of dead. After the Civil War, he became one of the leaders in the formation of the United Confederate Veterans. As you can see, it was only natural the Farmville Chapter of the UDC would be organized in his niece's home.

This Day in March in Prince Edward County History

- 3-1-1841 Blanche Kelso Bruce, first black U.S. Senator (elected from Mississippi), born in Farmville
- 3-1-1899 Gov. P.W. McKinney died at his home in Farmville
- 3-1-1917 Farmville Guard returned from Mexican Expedition.
- 3-1-1943 Word War II canned goods rationing began
- 3-2-1942 World War II defense training classes begin for Prince Edward citizens
- 3-2-1964 Prince Edward Hotel collapses while under renovation
- 3-3-1884 Farmville and Powhatan Railroad chartered (narrow-gauge line to James River)
- 3-4-1903 Tobacco factory known as "Dunlop's" burned, half million pounds of tobacco lost
- 3-4-1913 Farmville Guard marches at Woodrow Wilson's Inaugural
- 3-4-1949 East wing of State Teachers College burned, displacing 46 students
- 3-5-1839 Farmville Female Seminary established by local supporters (official birthdate of Longwood University)
- 3-5-1846 The South Side Rail Road chartered
- 3-6-1935 Birth of Barbara Johns, organizer of 1951 student strike at Moton School
- 3-7-1884 Virginia General Assembly passes law establishing State Female Normal School to train teachers at the already-existing "female seminary"
- 3-7-1886 State Female Normal School incorporated
- 3-7-1921 J.B. Wall purchased *The Farmville Herald*
- 3-8-1938 Farmville Rotary Club organized
- 3-10-1816 Judith Randolph, Farmville's "matriarch" died in Richmond, far from Bizarre plantation
- 3-12-1896 Farmville Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy organized
- 3-12-1956 "Southern Manifesto" introduced in U.S. Congress as regional attempt to offset effects of *Brown v. Board of Education*
- 3-13-1926 Devastating fire on Main Street. Burns 8 buildings in seven hours
- 3-13-1974 Uniroyal began finishing golf balls in the Farmville plant
- 3-15-1781 Peter Francisco and dozens of Prince Edward volunteers support Continental Gen. Greene at Battle of Guilford C. H. in North Carolina
- 3-15-1924 Star Warehouse burned to the ground
- 3-17-1917 Garden Club organized
- 3-19-1872 Last session held in 118-year old county court at Worsham
- 3-20-1775 Patrick Henry's "Liberty or Death" speech in Richmond
- 3-20-1821 Hampden-Sydney trustees begin plans for its signature building New College (Cushing Hall)
- 3-21-1891 Gen. Joseph Eggleston Johnston died in Washington D.C.
- 3-21-1903 All saloons closed under the dispensary act
- 3-22-1807 Former U.S. Vice President Aaron Burr spends night as prisoner at Prince Edward tavern on the way to his trial for treason
- 3-23-1861 The tobacco factory of Peters & Blanton burned
- 3-23-1902 "Billy" the *Herald's* office mocking bird found dead
- 3-24-1975 Amtrak's first stop in town "The Mountaineer" made the pull
- 3-26-1872 First session of carpetbagger-sanctioned county court at relocated judicial site in Farmville
- 3-27-1837 Farmville and Danville Railroad Co. chartered
- 3-28-1954 Fluorine is added to the water supply
- 3-28-1962 Martin Luther King, Jr., visits Farmville in support of reopening the public school system
- 3-29-1897 McDaniel family opens county's first private school for black children
- 3-29-1957 Hampden-Sydney's McIlwaine Hall burns under suspicious circumstances
- 3-31-1938 Farmville Rotary Club chartered

Upcoming Programs for April, May, and June

At our Tuesday, April 21 meeting, Dr. William Thompson will present a program on John Thackston Thornton - Hometown Hero.

Edwina Covington will discuss the Historic Highway Markers in Prince Edward County on Tuesday, May 19. In June, John Knowles will present the Crossing of the Dan.