



Farmville - Prince Edward Historical Society

P.O. Box 546

Farmville, Virginia 23901

September, 2009

The Farmville-Prince Edward Historical Society
the Town of Farmville and
the County of Prince Edward
cordially invite you and guests
to attend the dedication of
Virginia Historical Highway Marker I 14-a

Free Blacks of Israel Hill

**Sunday, September 27, 2009
3:00 p.m.**

**Intersection
West Third and Layne Street
Farmville, Virginia**

**Reception to follow at Farmville Train Station
510 West Third Street
R.S.V.P.
434-392-6431**



Israel Hill Marker unveiling

Realization of combined effort of the Society, the Town of Farmville, and Prince Edward County

A year ago the Farmville-Prince Edward Historical Society board passed a resolution to pursue the establishment of a Virginia historical highway marker to commemorate the citizens and descendants of Israel Hill. The Society Board supported Jo D. Smith as she went before both the Farmville Town Council and Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors requesting a three-way effort to finance this endeavor.

Now this organization and the governing bodies of the Town of Farmville and Prince Edward County will come together for the unveiling of this marker that will be located at the intersection of West Third Street and Layne Street in Farmville.

Dr. Melvin P. Ely, author of *Israel on the Appomattox: A Southern Experiment in Black Freedom from the 1790s Through the Civil War*, will be the featured speaker at the dedication. Debra White Beasley and John A. Robertson, descendants of Hercules White, one of the prominent citizens and businessmen on Israel Hill, will pull the cord to unveil the maker dedicated to their ancestors and the many others who made the community a success and a part of Farmville and Prince Edward County history.



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 meeting features *Send Me a Pain of Old Boots and Kiss My Little Girls: The Civil War Letters of Richard and Mary Watkins*

Jeff Toalson, author of *Send Me a Pair of Old Boots and Kiss My Little Girls: The Civil War Letters of Richard and Mary Watkins 1861-1865* (Richard and Mary Watkins were from Prince Edward County), will be the speaker at the October 20 meeting.

“Between 1861 and 1865, Confederate Captain Richard Watkins and his wife Mary exchanged detailed and heartfelt letters. Richard had enlisted with Company K of the 3rd Virginia Cavalry after Virginia seceded from the Union. Mary remained living near Meherrin, Virginia raising their three daughters and managing the farm. Sharing their letters with future generations was likely something the pair never envisioned.

“Editor Jeff Toalson, however, discovered, transcribed and annotated this extraordinarily rare collection of more than 300 unpublished letters. Held by the Virginia Historical Society, the letters convey detailed information about the war and daily life during a critical time in our nation's history. Unlike military accounts of Civil War maneuvers and battles, the letters bring a clear sense of humanity to the conflict and its effects on those who lived through the time.

“Richard and Mary's letters are touching and intriguing, weaving both a love story and an intense eyewitness account of the war. All of the major campaigns in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania are covered. Jeff's editing and attention to detail bring this heart-warming and engaging story to life. Despite the hardships, fears, disease and separation, you'll be fascinated by the humor, depth and the stark realities of the Watkins's lives.”

-- <http://search.barnesandnoble.com/Send-Me-a-Pair-of-Old-Boots-Kiss-My-Little-Girls/Jeff-Toalson/e/9781440110474>