

JANUARY 2022

FARMVILLE - PRINCE EDWARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Monthly Newsletter

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Our Next Meeting

The first Farmville-Prince Edward County Historical Society meeting in 2022 will be January 18th, 7pm at the Historic Farmville Train Station.

This will be our traditional Show & Tell meeting. We urge you to bring in items or collections from home to share with everyone! In addition, we will be sharing items from the Historical Society Archives and the Longwood University Archives.

This meeting is dependent on the weather and Covid conditions. Should we need to cancel the meeting, we will notify you via email as well as post the notice to Facebook and the historical society website.

YouTube Channel

Since it was launched in October of 2021 the Farmville-Prince Edward Historical Society YouTube channel has had nearly 500 views and has 12 subscribers! We are regularly adding more content. Subscribe to make sure you don't miss anything!

Membership Dues for 2022

Dues for 2022 have increased to \$20 for individual membership or \$30 for family membership or businesses. Dues can be paid in-person or checks can be mailed to:

FPEHS

P.O. Box 546

Farmville, VA 23901

We are planning some exciting projects for the new year and your dues are an important part of making those possible.

Volunteer Opportunity!

We are looking for volunteers to help us organize historical society archival collections. There is a significant number of backlogged collections as well as many new collections that need to be organized, described, and made accessible to the public.

If you are interested in helping us accomplish this goal, please contact Benedict Chatelain by email at: chatelainbg@longwood.edu or by phone at: 434.395.2448.

The Great Farmville Fire of 1898...

began shortly after 11pm on January 2nd in the Lumpkin Warehouse storeroom at the southwest corner of North and 3rd Streets. The building had been leased by Duvall, Robertson, and Company and was being used as a storage space for their hardware store. Unfortunately, one of the things they were storing was blasting powder, which the blaze ignited, sending sparks and burning rubble into the air. The fire quickly spread across the street to D.T. Elam's tobacco factory. Quickly realizing they were in need of more assistance, then-Farmville Mayor Richard Burton, raced to the telegraph office to request aid from the Lynchburg Fire Department. He also wired the Norfolk & Western station manager in Lynchburg, asking him to clear the tracks and prepare a train. The help from Lynchburg, however, never arrived. Although the Lynchburg Fire Chief quickly gathered the firemen, horses, and equipment to send to Farmville, a miscommunication between the station manager and the fire chief caused him to cancel their departure when he was mistakenly told it would take almost two hours for a train to be ready.



Within minutes after the explosion, the firefighters got word that the blaze had jumped nearly six blocks north, igniting three large tobacco warehouses owned by C.W. Blanton, W.G. Dunnington, and R.S. Paulett. One of W.P Gilliam's tobacco warehouses,

across Main Street from the other three, was spared, likely due to its metal roof. Likewise, the fire did not spread to the Farmville Flour Mills or the Randolph Tobacco Warehouse which both stood between the burning warehouses to the north and the quickly spreading fire six blocks south. Meanwhile, the Presbyterian Church, across the street from the fire's origins, was surrounded on all sides by burning buildings. Realizing all those structures were beyond saving, the firefighters focused on saving the church. Those efforts were rewarded and the church survived with only slightly scorched walls. Amazingly, despite the tremendous loss of over 40 buildings in downtown Farmville, no one lost their lives to this fire.



It Happened in January...

- 1-1-1754 Colonial act establishing Prince Edward County took effect.
- 1-1-1824 Union Theological Seminary formally opened at Hampden-Sydney.
- 1-2-1898 Fire in Farmville destroyed over thirty buildings. Originating at the corner of Third and North Streets in the Lumpkin factory, powder kegs exploded raining fire on the town.
- 1-2-1894 Governor Philip Watkins McKinney escorted back to Farmville by Farmville Guard.
- 1-3-1933 Farmville Mills burned.
- 1-4-1898 R.L. Dabney, famous Presbyterian theologian, architect, and former county luminary, died in Texas.
- 1-8-1754 Prince Edward County court convened for first time.
- 1-14-1813 Buffalo River, from its mouth at Farmville to Carter's Mill, declared a "public highway" by Virginia Public Assembly.
- 1-14-1904 Farmville Dispensary opened.
- 1-15-1798 Town of Farmville established by act of the Virginia General Assembly.
- 1-17-1898 B.S. Hooper, Republican congressman (1883-1885) from Farmville, died.
- 1-18-1952 Pedestrian lights installed at Third & Main.
- 1-18-1980 Rev. L. Francis Griffin, noted civil rights leader, died.
- 1-20-1977 The Red Lyon destroyed by fire.
- 1-21-1880 P.H. Jackson, tobacconist and host to Robert E. Lee, died.
- 1-22-1821 Dr. James T. Spencer was born.
- 1-22-1869 U.S. military replaced 52-year Clerk of Court Branch Worsham with "carpetbagger" appointee Joseph Jorgenson.
- 1-22-1901 The First National Bank opened its doors for business.
- 1-22-1905 T. J. Davis, Farmville grocer, died.
- 1-23-1940 24 inches of snow blanketed area.
- 1-23-2008 Clyde Jefferson Davis, respected Pontiac GMC truck dealer for 50 years, died.
- 1-27-1857 Hampden-Sydney student Ned Longhorne killed schoolmate Charles Edie in Cushing Hall in an "affair of honor."
- 1-27-1870 Virginia Senators and Representatives sat in Congress for the first time since 1861.
- 1-28-1858 Large fire damaged much of downtown Farmville.
- 1-28-1891 Dr. Horace Grymes Taliaferro, chief of Confederate General Hospital, died.
- 1-29-1922 24 inches of snow blanketed area.
- 1-30-1920 Dr. Peter Winston, physician, druggist, and mayor died.
- 1-31-1977 Gov. Godwin ordered strict energy conservation measures.