



# NEWS AND NOTES

from

## *The Fauquier Historical Society*

Vol. 6, No. 4

WARRENTON, VIRGINIA

Fall 1984

## Historic Conway Grove Restored

Local architectural conservationists are delighted with the restoration of Conway Grove by James F. Miller, in Warrenton's Historic District.

Though Mr. Miller originally intended to demolish the little frame house, he was persuaded by the Architectural Review Board's vote of four to three which saved the building. As a result, not only has an historic landmark been saved, but Mr. Miller is the first to speak of his delight, enthusiasm and satisfaction with the restored building.

On October 28, 1795, the property known as Conway Grove, on Winchester Street, Warrenton, appears in the Fauquier Court House records in an agreement "between James W. Wallace on one part and William Edmunds, Sr. and William Edmunds, Jr. on the other part. . . for. . . consideration of five shillings—current Virginia money—the release of all goods and chattelles" except the release of "interest he has in the House and Lot at Fauquier Court House, purchased of John Ransdell."

James W. Wallace was a surgeon in the Continental Army, having come originally from Falmouth, Virginia. He also served as physician to President Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

He married Elizabeth Edmunds, daughter of Colonel William Edmunds of the Revolutionary Army, and is credited with building the original house about 1820.

The marriage was not a happy one since the above agreement continues to state that "Elizabeth Wallace is to be at liberty at all time to depart from Bed and Board of the said James W. Wallace, whenever her convenience and happiness shall direct. Or any other cause that she may think



Conway Grove after Restoration.

Photo by Isabelle Palmer

proper."

Further evidence of the unhappy marriage is found in court records on February 22, 1796, in which Wallace appoints "William Edmunds, Sr., and William Edmunds, Jr., guardians for my children which I may have by the marriage with my present wife, the daughter of said William Edmunds, Sr., in case of any unfortunate disturbance or separation between me and my wife. . . empower the said guardians. . . to take possession of the children of said marriage."

At a later date James Wallace purchased land across the street on which Elizabeth built a residence for herself.

They had one son, James R. Wallace, who became a famous surgeon in Philadelphia. The elder Wallace is believed to have died in Warrenton in 1838.

### Succession Vague

At this point the order of succession becomes vague as the property eventually passed on to a Wallace son who is said to have died in Texas.

On April 28, 1848, a will was probated by the executors of one Elizabeth Macrea Wallace. In this will Elizabeth leaves to her niece "Ann Amelia H. Macrea, wife of Felix Richards, the house and lot on Winchester Road, along with other personal property."

The house was to be left to Ann Amelia after seven years use by Elizabeth's husband John R. Wallace. The land had been conveyed to Elizabeth, through Richard H. Foote, who held the house and land in trust for Elizabeth, as agreed upon in an agreement between John R. Wallace and Elizabeth M. Wallace.

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## Conway Grove

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The agreement further stated that John was to have no part or interest in any of the property held in trust for Elizabeth.

The next recorded deed appears on January 24, 1853, when Felix Richards and his wife Ann Amelia H., of Fairfax County, conveyed to Dr. Ambrose Hord the house and lot, containing four or five acres, for \$600. Previously, Dr. Hord had purchased, from Charles Bragg and his wife Mary, an adjoining tract of six or seven acres, making a total of ten or eleven acres. A blacksmith shop was said to have been on the second tract.

### "Conway Grove" Named

On January 29, 1856, Hord conveyed the land to John Armistead Spilman, who gave it the name Conway Grove in honor of his bride Elizabeth Conway.

The property was later purchased by Mrs. Henningham Lyons Spilman, wife of William Spilman, who conducted a fashionable boarding house there. Conway Grove was the birthplace of Robert Scott Spilman, a leader of the West Virginia bar.

From Mrs. Spilman, ownership went to Major R. A. McIntyre who, in turn, sold it to H. Conway Spilman, father of the late Hugh A. Spilman, the last Spilman of Conway Grove.

The property was then purchased by Thomas Frost and, on January 19, 1984, was sold to Mr. Miller who has restored the historic house.

According to one account, during the Civil War, cavalry often camped in the field beside the house. On one occasion, "Conway and his brother Willie, then boys, stole all the bridles of the Union horses and hid them under the Courthouse steps. They then sat on the steps and offered many helpful suggestions to the fuming troopers who swore death to the perpetrators of the deed."

### Alexander's Adventure

John H. Alexander, a Mosby Ranger, mentions Conway Grove in his accounts of his wartime experiences.

In 1863, at age 16, he had the chore of taking the family cow to graze on the Cedar Run bottoms, north of Warrenton, where the pasturage was rich and which, in those times, was free to such of the town cows as had not been "confiscated."

The pasture was a long narrow meadow separated from the Centreville (now called Alexandria) turnpike by a strip of woods and from the town by a high hill. Along the lower end grew a stand of pines. Down the middle of the meadow ran a strong stream on its way to Cedar Run, a mile away.

One afternoon when he reached the meadow he saw a number of

Union soldiers bathing at the stream. Their horses had been turned loose, without saddle or bridle, to graze. Of the soldiers, Alexander says: "What most impressed me was their absorption in themselves. The horses seemed to have drifted out of their attention altogether and one of them, especially, became the object of my intense interest."

Stealthily approaching the hobbled horse, often on his hands and knees, he freed it, and with soothing words led it to the brook. While the horse drank, he jumped upon his back and, with a few bounds, horse and rider were hidden in the pines.

For the next week, Alexander kept the horse in the pines. When he brought the cow to pasture he would carry the horse a bundle of grass and give him water, spending hours grooming and petting him. Horse and youth soon became fast friends.

One day he heard his aunt, Mrs. Sowers, who was staying at Conway Grove with Mrs. Spilman, say that she wished to visit Middleburg. But she had an ambulance and only one horse; what she needed was another horse and a driver.

He took her into his confidence and it was arranged that she would secure the necessary pass from General Sedgwick, who had his headquarters at the John Smith house at the western end of Winchester Street. Due to the warm weather, travelling in the early morning was preferred, so Alexander arranged that they should start before day-break.

However, in truth, his object was not so much to take advantage of the weather, rather to pass through the pickets while it was still too dark for them to see the "U. S." brand on the horse.

That evening, instead of bringing the cow up, he rode onto the Centreville pike about dusk on a bareback horse, with only a halter to control him. As he reached the pike a squad of cavalry was halted there, but they evidently took him for a hanger-on and paid no attention.

At the foot of the hill on which the courthouse stood, an alley (Diagonal Street) turns at an acute angle out of the pike, up a steep and rough way to Winchester Street. "When I reached this alley," he writes, "I was shocked to find a Yankee sentinel there. He promptly ordered me to

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# The Hollow Needs Help

The Friends of the Hollow, Inc., a corporation formed in the fall of 1981 for the purpose of researching, renovating and preserving the 18th century dwelling, will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, November 11, at 2:00 p.m. at Goose Creek Church, Markham, to formulate their plans for the future.

Situated in a field about a half-mile from Markham, the small structure is in a state of extreme deterioration.

This significant landmark in the history of Fauquier, which has withstood the ravages of wind and rain for more than 200 years, may well fade out of existence unless immediate and sympathetic help is forthcoming.

It has long been the tradition, firmly established in the minds of the descendants of the American frontiersman and Revolutionary soldier Colonel Thomas Marshall, that The Hollow is the frontier home which he built in 1765 after moving his family from Midland in southern Fauquier. He and his family lived here on 300 acres leased from Ludwell Lee until 1773, when he purchased 1700 acres, near Marshall, and built his house, which he called Oak Hill.

The Hollow is sited "at the south base of Naked Mountain, on a beautiful rise of land, washed by Wildcat Branch on the west and a spring-fed stream on the east. . . With its back to the mountain and the front to the south, overlooking a high valley of Goose Creek, sheltered on the south by Iden's Mountain and, still farther to the south, surmounted by the blue horizon of Rattlesnake Mountain. The crest of the Blue Ridge sweeps across the near western horizon, completing the rim that forms the boundary of the hollow."

## Classic Design

The well-built but fragile frame house is of the classic Virginia one and one-half story design. This original part is obscured from direct view from the road by an addition probably built around 1860.

The original house consists of two rooms on the first floor and an upper half story. The upper story is reached by an enclosed staircase in the smaller room, which does not have a fireplace. The walls are sheathed by horizontal, beaded paneling. The partition wall is



Photo by Isabelle Palmer

The Hollow, 1982

one thickness of these boards placed vertically and tongue-and-grooved. There is no plaster in the old part.

The old doors are board-and-batten and have no locks but have hand-made H & L hinges with handmade nails and leather washers. The visible rafters in the upper story are mortised-and-tenoned and pegged at the peak. The original beaded weatherboarding and hand-made nails have been preserved under the pantry addition.

The 1860 addition consists of a stairhall and living room with a full second story. The front door was changed to the addition's west side, with a porch.

The Friends of the Hollow have already taken measures to protect the building from further deterioration by the weather. A new roof has been placed on the old house, but the boards which were placed over the windows were later stolen by vandals.

The Friends have also taken steps to have the house declared an historical landmark. On March 17, 1981, the Virginia Landmarks Commission elected that this property should be included in a proposed Historic District of Markham. However, at the present writing there has been no action on the part of the Landmarks Commission on either the building or the town of Markham.

## Friends Seek Help

The Friends are also seeking professional help to mount a careful archaeological investigation, after which the dwelling will be restored as nearly as possible to its original condition and used as a museum.

The Hollow has survived torture

by the elements, and in more modern times, annihilation by Interstate 66 which condemned, moved or destroyed everything in its pathway. Unless work is done on the structure in the very near future, The Hollow will become only a chapter in the annals of Fauquier history.

Support for the restoration of The Hollow can be made through membership in The Friends of the Hollow. Memberships are \$5.00; sustaining memberships are \$25.00. Make checks payable to Treasurer, Friends of the Hollow, and send to: Mr. Alexander Green, Markham, VA 22643. Contributions are tax deductible.

1. Norman L. Baker. *Piedmont Virginian* 2 July 1975.

## The Hessians

The editor and newsletter staff are researching the history of the Hessians in Fauquier.

We would appreciate any information regarding the presence of the Hessian soldiers in our county. The legends of some Fauquier families credit these soldiers with many of the beautifully carved mantelpieces found in our old homes; it is well known that they were skilled carpenters.

We are also interested in family ties with Hessian descendants in New York, Winchester and Charlottesville, Virginia.

Please reply to The Editor, News and Notes, P.O. Box 675, Warrenton, VA 22186.

## Why Dogwood?

WARM SPRINGS, Ga. (AP) — Why is the pretty dogwood tree called a dogwood?

According to Georgia-Pacific, a forest products firm, the dogwood was named by American colonists who found it similar to a British tree which produces a chemical used as a medicinal cure for mange on dogs.

## Conway Grove

(Continued from Page 2)

halt. But I could not, as he saw for himself. My horse shied from him up the alley. I pulled hard on the halter strap and called him vociferously to stop; but he seemed to pay more attention to my off heel which was hammering his flanks, and before the sentinel and I could come to an understanding we had gotten so far from him that that incident was closed."

At the top of the hill, at Winchester Street, he met another sentinel and General Torbert, with his staff, dress parading down the street.

Of the incident he says: "'Tis true that I did not add much style to the procession, but, with the impudence of a boy, I fell in behind and nobody objected. I did myself the honor of riding with General Torbert's staff through the streets of Warrenton, as far as the gate into Conway Grove, through which I quietly dropped and stabled my steed. He surely had a good feed that night."

In the early hours of dawn, Mrs. Sowers and young Alexander left the town according to schedule; by high noon they had driven into the capital of Mosby's Confederacy.

### An Historic Home

During reconstruction, workmen found letters, cancelled checks and papers dated 1866-1867, between the plaster and ceiling joists in the attic. Among these were Conway Spilman's parole papers, freeing him from a Winchester prison after his capture in 1865. Receipts for payment of Conway's riding lessons were found.

Of historic note are the cancelled checks on the Payne Bank, dated 1887, for payment for construction of the mansard wing which had been added by the Spilmans.

The federal design of the little clapboard house is of outstanding architectural significance. Its gabled and gambreled roof line and overall scale, which Mr. Miller has retained, lend grace and charm. The chimney stack, cornice, fenestrations and front porch are elements which the present owner has not altered.

When a second story balcony, which was not in the original design, was added, care was taken to build the balcony floor several inches above the roof below so as not to destroy the original upright-seamed tin roof.



Restored Staircase

Equal care was taken to preserve the authenticity of the interior of the house.

Replacement materials were of old wood and carefully matched to existing patterns and materials.

The arch between the dining room and present kitchen was removed and repaired with old wood. Mantlepieces which were missing were replaced with those of houses of the same period.

The restoration of the staircase represents a dedicated attention to detail, adding to the attractiveness of the whole interior.



Drawing Room

For those who have a long-time relationship with Warrenton and Conway Grove, its preservation serves as an example of what good can be done by interested persons working together to protect our local heritage.

For newcomers to the town, the beautifully restored old home will continue to stand as a reminder of this commitment.

—Isabelle S. Palmer

## VWPS Chapter Formed

Organizational plans for the Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society were finalized at Great Meadow on June 30th.

The chapter, chartered in August, will include members from Fauquier and Loudoun counties. Great Meadow has been designated as headquarters for the Piedmont Chapter and as the site of the VWPS's regional landscape project and will become a permanent native plant refuge.

Founded in 1982 by Mary Painter, of Annandale, who serves as president, the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society is dedicated to strengthening and unifying conservation efforts on behalf of Virginia's native and naturalized plants.

Since 1982, the society has provided programs designed to promote the many values of our wildflower species and conservation measures necessary to protect them. It is represented by members whose experience ranges from that of the professional botanist to the budding wildflower enthusiast. Efforts are directed toward conservation, public education, wildflower cultivation, landscaping with native plants, rare plant inventory and habitat preservation.

The success of these efforts can be seen in the growing cooperation among developers, governments, and groups which share a common concern for Virginia's natural heritage.

Membership in the Piedmont Chapter is available in several categories, including individual, family, senior, student and associate. Persons who would like to lend support to the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society, without chapter affiliation, may do so as an at-large member.

For information on local membership write: Piedmont Chapter, VWPS, Membership Chairman, P.O. Box 248, The Plains, VA 22171.

**REMINDER!**

**Have You Renewed  
Your Membership?**

# Goose Creek Church Restored



1976

Photo by John G. Lewis



1984

Photo by Isabelle Palmer

The present congregation of the Goose Creek Baptist Church will celebrate the 200th anniversary of its original Primitive Baptist congregation in November.

The present structure, standing in a grove of oaks on the south side of Rt. 55, has been variously known as Upper Goose Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Goose Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Farrowville (Markham) Church, Goose Creek Baptist Church or, simply, Goose Creek Church.

The date of the stone, two-story building has been given as 1819 or 1825. However, a land deed, dated 1828, was drawn by Nimrod Farrow and his wife Molly; but before the deed was sealed and delivered, the names were Nimrod Farrow and wife Lucy.

The land was deeded to trustees Stephen Chilton, Robert M. Stribling, Alexander Keith, Nimrod Bishop, Philip Cooksey and John Tutt, "for the purpose of erecting a house of public worship."

Established as a place of "public worship," it was interdenominational for many years. However, as the stronger congregations grew, they moved away and the church became more or less regarded as belonging to the Primitive Baptist sect.

An architectural survey of 1938 states: "Building of stone of good proportions, oblong in shape with no porch. Modern flooring has been put in to cover the old wide boards and new window frames with large panes which seem out of harmony with the old structure. A gallery runs across the rear of the church and this is reached by a pair of outside steps." The survey further states that the

church in 1938 was used "by the Primitive Baptists as a Meeting House."

Some time during the period between 1938 and the present the outside stairway was removed. It was replaced by an interior stairway along the front wall of the building which gave access to the gallery.

In 1982, the Markham Methodist congregation, whose historic church had recently burned, and the Primitive Baptists worked together to restore the old church.

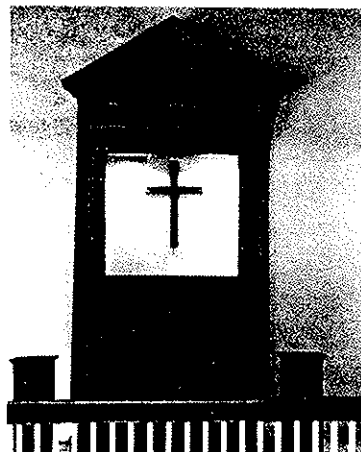
The Methodists had considered rebuilding their church, but as their congregation was very small, it was decided that they would both restore and use the stone church. The Methodists invested the \$55,000 insurance money from the burned church in Goose Creek Church.

The modern flooring, mentioned in the 1938 report, was removed. When the original flooring was found to be 95% sound, a few repairs were made and the complete floor reconditioned.

Old heart pine was used to construct and repair the interior woodwork and the pews were rebuilt with wood salvaged from the originals. A new fir tongue-and-groove ceiling was constructed, a heating system installed, and an organ placed in the gallery.

Future plans of the two congregations include the construction of much-needed outbuildings and landscaping of the grounds.

As the congregations of some of our historic churches grow smaller, the union of the Primitive Baptists and the Markham Methodists is very gratifying.



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How would you be willing to help the Society this year?

## CAN YOU HELP?

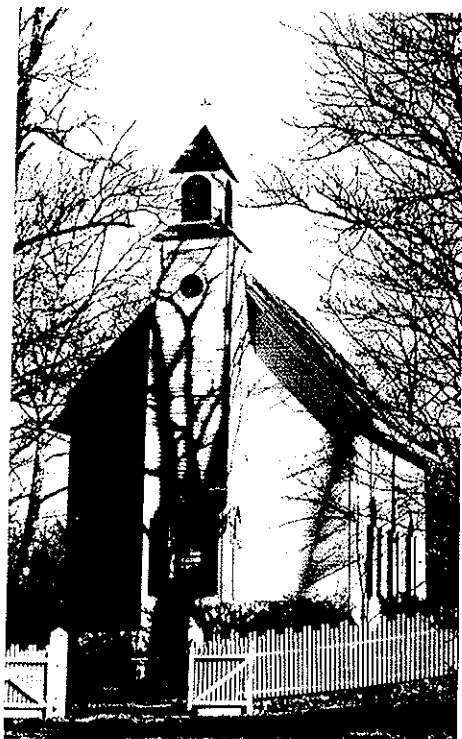


Photo by John G. Lewis

The United Methodist Church at Markham which burned in July 1981.

Founded in 1890, the Three Bay Pointed Arched Window frame church was constructed with an interesting slender belltower. For almost a century the little church played an important part in the life of the community.

In 1982 its congregation joined the Markham Baptists in restoring the Goose Creek Church.

*News and Notes will contain in each issue a list of as many persons as possible who are conducting genealogical or historical research on persons or places related to Fauquier County. To be included in this column write The Fauquier Historical Society, P. O. Box 675, Warrenton, VA 22186. Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.*

**BARBEE.** Mrs. Gloria Huenergardt, 22959 Califa St., Woodland Hills, CA 91367, seeks info on Joseph Barbee and wife Ann Withers Barbee who owned property in Fauquier 1790-1804. Barbee family were Protestant French Huguenots from England or Ireland.

**GIBSON, HERNDON, KEMPER, MAUZY, MORGAN.** Mrs. Dorothy S. Rizek, 2407 Davis Ave., Alexandria, VA 22302, seeks info on: Henry Mauzy, late 1700s-early 1800s; John and Peter Kamper (Kemper) ca. 1760; Charles Kemper, Jr. and Sr., 1700s-early 1800s of Cedar Grove (now Cloverly); and George Gibson (father of Charles) ca. 1784.

**HEFLEBOWER/HEFFELBOWER/HEFLYBOWER.** Lewis Bunker Rohrbach, 43 Sea St., Rockport, ME 04856, seeks info on Jacob Heflebower b. 23 Mar 1818, d. 29 Oct 1881, m. Mary E. Maddix, 21 May 1848 in Fauquier. Also info on M. E. Hefle-

bower, b. Feb 1827 in Marshall District, Fauquier.

**HINDALL.** Gerald G. Hindall, P. O. Box 624, Arlington, OH 45814, seeks info on John Hindall, Sr., d. during summer 1829 in Fauquier. Was thought to have been a soldier in Lord Cornwallis' army. When Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, his soldiers were farmed out as prisoners throughout Virginia. He never returned to England. Children: Mary, Margaret, Susan C., Elizabeth McLaren; Nancy McLeary; Robert B., b. Va.; John Jr.; William.

**TAYLOR.** Mrs. Mary Taylor Brewes, HC 65, Box 50, Wooton, KY 41776, seeks info on her Taylor ancestors who lived in Fauquier 1759-1800. Nimrod Taylor b. ca. 1756, m. Mary Lotz/Lutz ca. 1777-1781. Nimrod's father was George Taylor, b. Fairfax Co. Also info on Mary whose family possibly of Germanna Colony of Fauquier.

**TRIPLETT, SAMUEL.** Mrs. Susan D. Samuel, 925 Todd Preis Dr., #V-403, Nashville, TN 37221, seeks info on the Triplett and Samuel families of Fauquier. Catherine, dau. of John Triplett, may have been m. ca. 1785-1794 to Robert Samuel in Fauquier. Requests documentation of marriage, will of John naming Catherine and marriage record.

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### *The Fauquier Historical Society*

P. O. Box 675, Warrenton, VA. 22186

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