



## From the Vault: A Colonial Fireback

One of the more unusual items in the Society's collections is a cracked piece of cast iron measuring approximately 22 inches by 29 inches. A cast cherub's head and a partial date "\_\_\_ ye 25 1758" are visible, but the rest of the date has been broken off. This item was probably made as a fireback for a colonial fireplace. The cherub's head marks it as being produced by the Spotswood family's Tubal iron works. Only a few items bearing the Tubal works cherub are known to survive.

The fireback was discovered in the late 1980s on property in Orange County owned by what was then the Atlantic Research Corporation (ARC). Local Civil War expert Steven

Sylvia found the fireback while exploring Civil War campsites in the area, and through the joint efforts of ARC, Mr. Sylvia, and the Orange County Historical Society, the site was marked for preservation. The fireback was presented by ARC to the Orange County Historical Society at its regular meeting on November 28, 1988: shown in the bottom photograph are Philip Shrack of ARC, Society president J. Randolph Grymes Jr., and the Society's research historian Ann Miller.

A brief history of the Tubal works and its known products will be presented in an upcoming newsletter.



*In Memoriam*Adra Bradbury “Bee” Browning,  
1918–2013

With the passing of Society charter member and former administrator Adra “Bee” Browning on January 25, Orange has lost an authority on local history and families, a stalwart supporter of the Historical Society, and a unique individual.

A lifelong resident of Orange, Bee was a descendant of many of the region’s early families: Taliaferros, Brownings, Thomases, Beverleys, Strothers, and many more. After retiring from her secretarial career, Bee joined the Society’s staff, serving as administrator of the Research Center for a number of years. The Society was the beneficiary of Bee’s interest in, and knowledge of, history and genealogy: not only did she contribute copies of some of her own research notes and published sources to our archives, but she generously assisted other local and visiting researchers.

Bee was an extremely precise researcher and a careful fact-checker—traits she shared with her much-admired first cousin (and fellow researcher and historian), the late J. Randolph Grymes, Jr. The Society’s files and library are the richer both for her own research and for her corrections and emendations of other material.

Working with Bee was both an honor and an education. Her memory was outstanding and her command of local and family information was both deep and broad. Time spent with Bee could encompass discussions on many subjects. She could hold forth on the various members of the Taliaferro family who had the given name “Hay,” plus their landholdings (Bee may have been the only family genealogist who could completely sort them out). She could discuss place names, and the occupations and relationships of long-gone local inhabitants, in detail. Other talks with Bee might veer into teaching this non-Virginia native the proper Piedmont Virginian way to pronounce the surname, Strother [Straw’-ther / Straaw-tha], and relating anecdotes about various mispronunciations of the name, Taliaferro [Tol’-i-ver], as well as discussing older regional speech patterns. And, working from Bee’s personal family papers, we compared and contrasted her sober and religious paternal grandfather, Gustavus Judson (Jud) Browning, versus his alter ego, the bumptious “Jud Brownin” character who appeared in several humorous stories by the real Jud’s friend Dr. George W. Bagby.

Even as Bee became a nonagenarian and her mobility became more limited, she retained her interest in history and the Society and remained available for consultation with Society staff through phone calls. She will be sincerely missed.

Ann L. Miller

## Shady Grove School (1925–1954)

Jayne E. Blair



Jayne E. Blair

On 1 September 2007, the Shady Grove Baptist Church celebrated the restoration of a small one-room school building that had for many years served the black children in the Shady Grove neighborhood. Ms. Rebecca Gilmore Coleman explained that the school “played a very important role in the education of African-Americans before integration. It’s so much a part of where we are today.” The little white frame school, built in 1925, was used not only as a kindergarten and elementary school but also served as a middle school for many years until the school was closed in 1954. It was here, according to an *Orange County Review* article dated 6 September 2007, that the student not only learned to read and write, but also “learned responsibility and respect.” The building was heated by a stove vented to a brick chimney and it was the children’s responsibility each morning to feed the stove. The parents and the children maintained the building, cleaning it and chopping the firewood.

The school was closed in 1954 as part of a consolidation program and students were relocated to Lightfoot Elementary School. In 1957, the school building was purchased by the Shady Grove Baptist Church where it continued to be a place of education as the building was used for Sunday school. By 2007, Shady Grove Church members and friends had restored the building to its original appearance, with desks similar to the desks used by the students and the school’s original chalkboard back where it was in 1925. There are hopes that in the future, this tiny one-room building will become a museum dedicated to the importance of education for everyone.

## Please Don’t Forget . . .

To renew your membership! Did you know that membership dues make up almost 20% of our annual income (another 20% coming from the kindness of our annual fund drive donors)? You can see why your membership is so important to us. Thank You!

## Peter Gilbert, the Strong Man

Stuart G. Vogt

Peter Gilbert wasn't his real name, and he wasn't from Virginia; his probable formal name was Pedro Y. Gillabert<sup>1</sup> and he was born in Spain. Exactly where in Spain is a mystery. The only facts we know about his family come from the record of his second marriage in which he listed his parents as William Gilberto and Elizabeth Cardona.<sup>2</sup> His year of birth is variously listed as 1808, 1809, and 1810.

Some time before 1836, Peter made his way from Spain to Cuba. He departed for the U. S. from Baracoa, Cuba, which is on the eastern tip of the mainland, above Guantanamo Bay. It was a very secluded port that could only be reached by sea until the 1960s when the first road into it was built. In July 1836, Peter and three other men, all listed as "merchants," set sail from Baracoa on the schooner *Veloz Jupiter*, skippered by Tayme Bonnell, bound for New York.<sup>3</sup> The *Veloz Jupiter* arrived at New York City on 26 July 1836 and discharged its passengers at the docks.

What Peter did and where he traveled for the next two years is not known. He apparently knew English well enough to at least get by. The unanswerable question: How did he wind up in a small village in rural Virginia? Whatever the case, he was in Orange long enough to court and wed a local girl, Frances S. Garton, on 15 September 1838 (bond). Frances was the daughter of Spencer Garton and Mary Hancock, daughter of William Hancock and Jemima Brock. Both of Frances's parents had died before Peter arrived on the scene.<sup>4</sup> His name was grandly recorded as Don Pedro Y. Gillabert on the marriage bond; his signature appears as an odd assemblage of chop marks and letter forms, with no semblance of a coherent name.



He appears in the 1840 census for Orange with his wife, a young female under age five, and a male slave between 10 and 24. One person, most likely Peter, was engaged in manufacturing.<sup>5</sup> A decade later, the 1850 census shows Peter Gilabert (sic), forty-one years old, living in the village of Orange. His occupation was listed as shoemaker and there were now four children: Elizabeth, 11; William, 7; James, 2; and Maryana (Mary Ann), 11 months old.<sup>6</sup> Also living in the Gilbert household was an unnamed eighty-

five-year-old slave woman.<sup>7</sup> Most likely she came from someone in Frances's family, and Frances and Peter took her in as a matter of decency.

Peter lived along the Plank Road, now Byrd Street, south of Main Street. Most of the inhabitants along this street were skilled tradesmen. They included William Parker, a carriage maker; John Cox, an iron moulder; Andrew Gaines, a hatter; Trenton Kenedy, a cooper (barrel maker); William Bundy, a harness maker, and Walter G. Jones, a shoemaker. Bundy and Jones were both free blacks.<sup>8</sup>

In 1860 Peter, working as a butcher, was living next-door to postmaster Henry Hiden. The census taker misnumbered the family making it appear that Peter was living in the Hiden household and Frances was the head of the Gilbert household. Three children James and Nancy (should be Mary Ann), both twelve years old; and Theresesa, seven years old; are also in the household. The oldest of Peter and Frances's children, Elizabeth and William, are not listed and were presumably on their own.<sup>9</sup>

Peter seemed to fit into life in a small town, and joined the local militia unit, the Montpelier Guard, commanded by Captain Lewis B. Williams Jr. W. W. Scott described a militia muster:

The appearance of field and staff mounted on prancing steeds was a triumphal pageant and when Allen Long and Peter Gilbert struck up 'The Girl I Left Behind Me' on fife and drum, the martial spirit became intense...<sup>10</sup>

Such peacetime musters were about to become a thing of the past. On 16–19 October 1859, John Brown led his raid on Harpers Ferry. In the aftermath, the Montpelier Guard was one of the units ordered to Charlestown, (West) Virginia where Brown's trial was held. The Guard remained there until after the hanging of Brown and four of his men on 16 March 1860.<sup>11</sup> As far as we can tell, Peter Gilbert was with his unit watching the events unfold. At least one source says that the Montpelier Guard was Brown's escort to the scaffold.<sup>12</sup>

Sometime after March 1860, Peter parted company with the Montpelier Guard, by then Company A, 13th Virginia Infantry.<sup>13</sup> On 17 April 1861, he enlisted as a drummer in the Gordonsville

dwelling no. 388, family no. 391.

<sup>7</sup> 1850 U.S. Census, Virginia, Orange Co., slave schedule, p.737.

<sup>8</sup> 1850 U.S. Census, Virginia, Orange Co., Orange village, pp. 241–2, dwelling no. 388, family no. 391.

<sup>9</sup> 1860 U.S. Census, Virginia, Orange Co., p. 676, dwelling and family no. 800.

<sup>10</sup> W. W. Scott, *A History of Orange County, Virginia: From Its Formation in 1734 (o.s.) to the End of Reconstruction in 1870: Compiled Mainly from Original Records with a brief Sketch of the Beginnings of Virginia, a Summary of Local Events to 1907, and a Map* (Richmond, Va.: E. Waddey, 1907), 125.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Warner, Ezra J. "Ambrose Powell Hill," *Generals in Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 134–5.

<sup>1</sup> He appears variously in the records as Gilabert, Gillabert, Gelabert, Gilbert and Gilberto.

<sup>2</sup> *Orange County Marriage Register 2, 1854–1912*, Clerk's Office, Orange.

<sup>3</sup> *New York Passenger Lists 1820–1957, Year: 1836*, National Archives microfilm M237.

<sup>4</sup> *Orange County Marriage Bond Book 14, 1837–1842*. Clerk's Office, Orange. Burton L. Garten, *The Descendants of William Garton of Lancaster County, Colony of Virginia*, 2 vols. (Greenwood, Ind.:the author, 2003), 13. Cole C. Diggs, Frances's brother-in-law, was surety on the bond.

<sup>5</sup> 1840 U.S. Census, Virginia, Orange Co., p. 10. All census records were verified on *Ancestry.com*, Feb 2013.

<sup>6</sup> 1850 U.S. Census, Virginia, Orange Co., Orange village, p. 241,

## Gilbert (*continued*)

Greys (Company C, 13th Virginia Infantry).<sup>14</sup> He was mustered into Confederate service on 9 May 1861, while the 13th was encamped at Bolivar, (West) Virginia, just outside Harpers Ferry. The 13th saw some combat at New Creek Depot, (West) Virginia on 18 June when they routed Federal troops. In July, they arrived too late to see action at First Manassas on the 21st. Peter appears on the unit muster rolls as present for July-August 1861.<sup>15</sup> The Army went into winter quarters at Centreville, a few miles east of the Manassas battlefield on the Warrenton Turnpike. Apparently, Peter's rheumatic conditions caught up with him in the chill of the winter. On 20 November 1861, Peter received a medical discharge signed by A. P. Hill. Dr. William H. Grymes had examined Peter and found him "...incapable of performing the duties of a soldier because of old age & chronic rheumatism."<sup>16</sup> His discharge papers, provide the only description we have of Peter: He was 5' 6" tall, with a dark complexion, hazel eyes, and black hair. No photograph of him is known to survive.

In early 1863, Peter made another foray into military life when, on April 18th, in Caroline County, he enlisted as a drummer in Captain Charles. R. Montgomery's Morris Artillery.<sup>17</sup> One of the other battalion batteries was the Orange Artillery, commanded by Captain Charles W. Fry, the Orange County native who had come back home at the beginning of the War from Arkansas.<sup>18</sup> Peter's name shows up in a list of members of the Orange Artillery in the Virginia state rosters, but there are no surviving service records of his transfer.<sup>19</sup>

Muster rolls for the Morris Battery record Peter as being present from May 1863 through June 1864.<sup>20</sup> If he was truly present then he would have survived the Chancellorsville and Gettysburg campaigns, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and on down to the outskirts of Richmond. But his service records abruptly stop at the end of 1864. It may have been that whatever later papers were in his service file got lost or destroyed, so we don't know how he ended the War. Coming home at last to Orange must have been daunting. The county had been stripped bare for supplies and there were earthworks and abandoned camps everywhere.

On 2 August 1866, Peter's seventeen-year-old daughter Mary Ann married twenty-four-year-old James Hoile of Rutherford County, North Carolina, at a ceremony in Orange.<sup>21</sup> In October 1867, Frances Gilbert, sixty years old, died of cancer. Frances' place of burial is unknown.<sup>22</sup>

Peter married again at the age of fifty-nine on 28 February 1869 in Orange. The new Mrs. "Gilbert" was twenty-four-year-old Elizabeth Staples of Orange County. She was the daughter of William E. Staples and Mary Jane (Garton) Staples. Mrs. Staples was the full sister of Peter's first wife, so Elizabeth was Peter's niece by marriage.<sup>23</sup>

The 1870 census shows Peter and Elizabeth living in the town of Orange. Peter was again working as a shoemaker, and Elizabeth was "keeping house."<sup>24</sup> By 1880, there were a number of changes in the Gilbert household. First, there were two children, Mary (b. 1871) and Edward (b. 1873) and Peter again working as a butcher.<sup>25</sup> Eventually, Elizabeth would have a total of six children, four of whom lived to adulthood. The other two children who survived were Charles (b. Feb 1881) and Barbour (b. Mar 1885).

In late 1872, Peter ran afoul of the law in Orange and was sentenced to five days in jail.<sup>26</sup> According to Frank Walker, Orange County historian, the crime sounds like a status crime, such as being drunk in public. On 23 December 1872, the Town trustees commuted Peter's jail sentence conditional upon his paying a fine. Bitterly cold weather and sickness in Peter's family were cited as reasons.

Peter probably died sometime after 1885. The date of death is unknown. The only reference to Peter's place of burial is a note in the records of the Orange County Historical Society that states, "Peter Gilbert, the strong man, burried in Potter's Field."<sup>27</sup>

The 1900 census for Taylor District lists Elizabeth as a widow with sons Charles and Barbour, both farm laborers, living at home. Barbour is shown as illiterate but going to school; Charles is described as literate and not in school.<sup>28</sup> Charles wouldn't be living at home much longer. Sometime about 1903, Charles married Alcesta M., and in 1904 his son, Linwood E. Gilbert, was born, followed by Vivian D. and Charles T.<sup>29</sup> They divorced sometime after 1910; Charles retained custody of the children. On 15 September 1914, Charles married Mary Frances Penny of Charles City County, in Richmond.<sup>30</sup> The last glimpse of Charles and Mary we

typescript, Orange County Historical Society, Orange.

<sup>23</sup> *Orange County Marriage Register 2, 1854-1912*. Clerk's Office, Orange. Burton, *The Descendants of William Garton*, 23-4.

<sup>24</sup> 1870 U.S. Census, Virginia, Orange Co., Orange C.H., p. 216b, dwelling no. 64, family no. 94.

<sup>25</sup> 1880 U.S. Census, Virginia, Orange Co., Orange C.H., p. 245, dwelling no. 339, family no. 343.

<sup>26</sup> Town of Orange Minute Book, 1872, p. 126. 23 Dec 1872-Commutation of Peter Gilbert's jail time. Email from Frank Walker to the author 21 Sept 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Undated handwritten note on scrap of paper, Civil War Account Book of Wm. R. Grymes, Orange, Va., Orange County Historical Society, Orange. This note was brought to my attention by Frank Walker and Ann Miller. Potters Field is the section of Graham Cemetery where the wartime Confederate burials were made.

<sup>28</sup> 1900 U.S. Census, Virginia, Orange Co., Taylor Dist., p. 117a, dwelling and family no. 166.

<sup>29</sup> 1910 U.S. Census, Virginia, City of Richmond, 2311 T. St., p. 9b, dwelling no. 188, family no. 204

<sup>30</sup> Entry for Charles M. Gilbert and Mary Frances Penny, 1914.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Gilbert enlistment paper, 13th Virginia Infantry, *Compiled Service Records (CSR) of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Virginia*, National Archives microfilm M324, roll 537.

<sup>15</sup> Muster rolls for July-Aug 1861, CSR.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Gilbert, medical discharge paper, CSR.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Gilbert, CSR.

<sup>18</sup> Stuart G. Vogt, "The Orange Artillery," mss, ca. 1977. Orange County Historical Society, Orange.

<sup>19</sup> Scott, *History of Orange County*, 272.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Gilbert, CSR.

<sup>21</sup> Entry for Mary Ann Gilbert and James Hoile, 1866, "Virginia Marriages, 1785-1940," *Family Search*, (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record>).

<sup>22</sup> *Orange County Death Register, 1853-4, 1864-96, 1912-18.*, p. 34;

## Gilbert (*continued*)

have is through the 1940 census. It was just the two of them, living on Second Avenue.<sup>31</sup>

Charles's older brother, Edward Gilbert, born in 1873, shows up in Richmond for the 1900 census. In 1899 he married Missouri Atkinson, who was born in 1875 in Virginia.<sup>32</sup> In 1900, the couple were renting at 2237 Venable Avenue in Richmond. (The house is still standing as of 2012 in reasonably good repair!) Edward was listed as shipyard laborer, presumably at the Port of Richmond.<sup>33</sup> No further information has been found.<sup>34</sup>

William P., from Peter's first marriage, was in Richmond during the War, but there is no record of service in the Confederate armed forces. He was by trade a harness maker, which was a critical skill. As such, he may have been employed by the Confederate Ordnance Department making leather goods such as cartridge boxes, saddles, and of course, harness. On 2 February 1864 William married in Richmond, Miss Matilda Fuhring, the daughter of German immigrants, David and Mary Fuhring.<sup>35</sup>

In 1880 William and his wife were living in Brownsville, Saline County, Missouri, with a son, James (age 8).<sup>36</sup> Matilda's father David Fuhring, apparently a widower by the 1870s, had joined them, but he passed away 23 November 1876, and was buried in Fairview Cemetery.<sup>37</sup> Matilda died 22 March 1887 and is buried with her father. On 14 February 1888 William married Flora Ann Minor of Miami Township.<sup>38</sup> In 1898 William and Flora had a daughter, Mary E. Gilabert who lived for exactly one month, from March 7th to April 7th.

In 1910 William and Flora were living in Calloway, Missouri. Also in the household were daughter Florine, sons Preston and Robert Earl, their married son Erskin, his wife Lottie, and their daughter, Flora E.<sup>39</sup> By 1920, William and Flora were in Jackson, Missouri, in the household of Louise Taylor.<sup>40</sup> They eventually settled in Miami, Missouri, where William Preston Gelabert died on 13 July 1925, from "chronic enteritis." He was eighty-two years

old.<sup>41</sup> He was buried in the Miami Cemetery the next day. Flora died in 1931 and is buried next to William.<sup>42</sup>

William was a prolific inventor; some, but probably not all, of the patents issued in his name or with others:

#493,995 (Billet Loop), issued March 21, 1893

Canadian Patent #42,677 (Loop for Harnesses), issued April 18th, 1893

#580,212 (Hook for Hame-Tugs), issued April 6th, 1897

#607,925 (Sash Holder & Hook), issued July 26th, 1898

#616,609 (Buckle & Loop), issued December 27th, 1898

#660,544 (Buckle), issued October 23rd, 1900

#943,870 (Improved Strap Buckle) issued January 6th, 1900

#1,078,140 (Horse Collar), issued November 11th, 1913

Robert Earl Gelabert settled on the West Coast in Los Angeles, where he was a wholesale coffee salesman. In 1940 he was married with no children.<sup>43</sup> He died in Los Angeles on 14 May 1942.<sup>44</sup> William Preston Gelabert also wound up in California, working as a real estate broker in Santa Clara. He too was married with no children.<sup>45</sup> He died in Santa Clara on 2 March 1951.<sup>46</sup>

The late Orange County historian W.H.B. "Bill" Thomas wasn't from Orange, and I once asked him how he came to settle here. It seems that during World War II, one of his close friends who was from Orange invited him to come home with him on leave. Bill took up his offer, and on seeing Orange said to himself that this is where he wanted to live. I can't help but think that Peter thought the same thing when he first came to Orange. And that's exactly what he did.

**Acknowledgements:** With appreciation to Ann Miller and Frank Walker of Orange, Robert E. L. Krick of Richmond, and my stepson Ethan Elgin for their research, support and comments during my search for Peter Gilbert. All errors I claim as my own.

Stuart Vogt was an historian with the National Park Service for 20 years, serving at Manassas, Fredericksburg, and Springfield Armory (MA). For four years he was the U.S. Army historian for the 101st Airborne Division, at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. Mr. Vogt had a second career in the manufacturing sector, and was the owner of a tool & gage design company. He is now retired and lives in Westfield, Massachusetts.

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"Virginia Marriages, 1785-1940." Curiously enough, Charles put down "Wm. P. Gilbert" as his father.

<sup>31</sup> 1940 U.S. Census, Virginia, City of Richmond, Jefferson Ward, p.672, 1719 21st St., family no. 72.

<sup>32</sup> "Virginia Marriages, 1785-1940."

<sup>33</sup> 1900 U.S. Census, Virginia, City of Richmond, p. 7a, dwelling no. 108, family no. 118.

<sup>34</sup> An Ed Gilbert, a widower, born in 1873, shows up as an inmate in the Arizona State Hospital. 1920 U.S. Census, Arizona, Maricopa Co., Arizona State Hospital, p. 272.

<sup>35</sup> Entry for William P. Gilbert and Matilda Fuhring, 1864, "Virginia Marriages 1785-1940."

<sup>36</sup> 1880 U.S. Census, Missouri, Saline Co., Brownsville, p. 412d, dwelling no. 39, family no. 42.

<sup>37</sup> Fairview Cemetery Burials, [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mosaline/4tombstones/fairview.htm](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mosaline/4tombstones/fairview.htm).

<sup>38</sup> Flora Ann Minor, ID: I21774, "Higgins/Trent/Moon," *RootsWeb*, ([www.rootsweb.ancestry.com](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com)).

<sup>39</sup> 1910 U.S. Census, Missouri, Callaway Co, Fulton Twnshp., p. 142, dwelling no. 338, family no. 352.

<sup>40</sup> 1920 U.S. Census, Missouri, Jackson, Saline Co, Salt Pond Twnshp., p. 6a, dwelling and family no. 125.

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<sup>41</sup> *William Preston Gelabert, Missouri Death Certificate #22753, 1925, Missouri Digital Heritage: Death Records Certificates* (<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/deathcertificates/default.asp>).

<sup>42</sup> Shirley Haynes and Avlyn Conley, *Miami Cemetery Burials* ([www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mosaline/2tombstones/miami.htm](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mosaline/2tombstones/miami.htm)).

<sup>43</sup> 1940 U.S. Census, California, Los Angeles Co., Arcadia, Monrovia Twnshp., family no. 516.

<sup>44</sup> Entry for Robert E. Gelabert, Born 13 Sept 1892 in Missouri. California Death Index, 1940-1997. California Dept. of Health Services, Vital Statistics Section, Sacramento, Calif.

<sup>45</sup> 1940 U.S. Census, California, Santa Clara Co., Santa Clara Twnshp., p. 9b, family no. 307.

<sup>46</sup> Entry for William Preston Gilabert, California Death Index, 1940-1997. Born 26 June 1896 in Missouri.

## Dr. Elhanon Winchester Row

Patrick Sullivan

Born in King and Queen County in 1754, Thomas Row came to Orange County soon after completing his Revolutionary War service in Captain Thomas Gaskins's Company of the Fifth Virginia Regiment. He began to buy parcels of land in the area where today's Route 20 crosses Mine Run, ultimately creating a 427-acre farm that included a grist mill. He and his wife Rachel documented the births of their thirteen children and the slaves who lived with them.<sup>1</sup> Over the years Thomas Row served his community as high sheriff, magistrate, and colonel of the third regiment in the first brigade of the second division of Virginia militia.

After Thomas Row's death in 1840, ownership of the Row farm passed to his youngest son, Elhanon Row (1798–1874). Committed to public service like his father, Elhanon served as a school commissioner and as the first elected sheriff of Orange County. Appointed administrator of the estate of John P. Todd, James Madison's stepson, in June 1854 he conducted the sale of the late president's library to help pay off the estate's debts. In May 1862 Lieutenant Governor Daniel A. Wilson appointed Elhanon Row colonel of his father's old regiment in the state militia. His original commission is among the archival treasures of the Orange County Historical Society.

Like his father before him, Elhanon Row named his youngest son for the eighteenth-century Universalist minister, Elhanon Winchester. Born at the Row farm on 8 November 1833, the younger Elhanon taught school for a time in Alexandria and attended classes at the University of Virginia in 1856–1857. He studied medicine under Dr. David Pannill before enrolling in the medical school at the University of Pennsylvania where he received his medical degree in 1858. He returned to Orange and practiced medicine until Virginia's secession in 1861.

Dr. Elhanon Row enlisted in Company I, 6th Virginia Cavalry on 4 May 1861. He served on detached duty as assistant surgeon at the army hospital established at Orange County Court House. He was later appointed regimental surgeon of the 14th Virginia Cavalry, in which capacity he served for the remainder of the war.

After the battle at Gettysburg, Dr. Row remained on the field to render aid to the wounded men of his regiment. Captured by

Union troops on 5 July 1863, he was sent to the prison at Fort McHenry where he fell prey to the dysentery that afflicted most of the prisoners in such facilities. Admitted to the prison hospital on 20 October 1863, he remained there almost a month. Still sick, he was exchanged as a prisoner of war on November 21 and was released at City Point. He was admitted to General Hospital No. 4 in Richmond and on 3 December 1863, received a forty-day furlough to complete his convalescence in Lynchburg.

Rejoining his regiment as soon as he was able, he managed to avoid capture a second time during the fight at Cedar Creek on 19 October 1864. With the bedraggled remnants of the 14th Cavalry, Elhanon Row was surrendered by General Lee at Appomattox on 9 April 1865.

After the war Elhanon returned to Orange and resumed his medical practice, which was located at Orange County Court House, opposite D. H. Taliaferro's Drug Store. On 20 October 1875 he married Ida Newman, with whom he had three children. Only one daughter, Lottie, survived infancy. Dr. Elhanon Row was elected to the House of Delegates in 1883. There he sponsored legislation which created the Virginia Medical Examining Board.

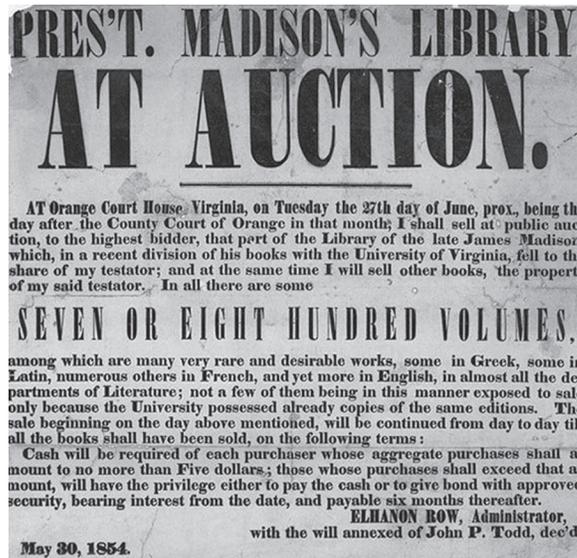
In recognition for this achievement he was elected president of the Medical Society of Virginia in 1888. Elhanon Row died on 23 May and is buried in Graham Cemetery.

### Sources:

Howard Atwood Kelly and Lincoln Burrage, *American Medical Biographies*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1912), 338.

*Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Virginia*. Microfilm publication M324A War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

Pat Sullivan, born and raised in Spotsylvania County, earned a degree in Russian language at Madison College in Harrisonburg. In retirement he has devoted himself to archiving and researching the thousands of extant photographs, letters and papers of his richly documented ancestors. He writes extensively about their lives on his website, *Spotsylvania Memory*. Pat and his wife reside in South Carolina.



<sup>1</sup> High resolution scans of Rachel Keeling Row's prayer book documenting the births of her thirteen children, other family members, and of forty-six slaves who lived and worked on the Row farm and at the mill can be viewed at "The Prayer Book of Rachel Keeling Row," *Spotsylvania Memory*, <http://spotsylvaniamemory.blogspot.com/2012/04/prayer-book-of-rachel-keeling-row.html>. For the original see Keeling, Rowe and Farish Family Papers, 1765–1877, Accession #11144, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville.

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Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Seilheimer Jr.  
Ann Belfield Thornton  
Joseph & Carla Wascalus, in honor of preserving Orange  
County History  
R.T. Whitman  
F. Beale Wilhoit, in memory of Randolph Grymes

### Supporters:

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Robert & Toni Burton, in honor of May Burton Sr.  
Mr. Robert Cayce III  
Joyce Clark  
John Tranver & Rose Graham, in memory of Ona S.  
Graham, school teacher for 40 years  
Douglas M. Graves  
Newt Green, in memory of Angus McDonald Green

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Ellen K. Wessel

## Gone, But Not Forgotten: Lt. Severn M. Nottingham Jr.

*Paul Carter*

The first Orange County casualty of World War II was a Navy lieutenant, Severn M. Nottingham Jr., the son of Severn Marcellus and Jacqueline (Ware) Nottingham. Born 2 October 1915, he attended Orange County High School before entering Woodberry Forest School. Graduating with honors in 1932, he entered the University of Virginia. He completed his law degree in 1938 and joined his father in the law firm of Nottingham and Nottingham in Orange. He also became involved in the community joining the Orange Lions Club and serving as its first secretary.

A member of the Naval Reserve, on 4 September 1940, he volunteered for active service in the U. S. Navy and was ordered to the *USS Prairie State* in the Hudson River of New York. He was commissioned an ensign on 6 June 1941 and sent to torpedo school at Keyport, Washington. In October 1941, he reported for duty on board the destroyer, *USS Cushing*, then docked in San Francisco and was promoted to lieutenant junior grade in June 1942.

The *Cushing* became a part of the naval force charged with the duty of assisting the Allied infantry fighting for possession of the Japanese-held island of Guadalcanal. The Japanese navy was both conveying troops and supplies to the island and attempting to shell Allied positions. At approximately 1:30 a.m. on 13 November 1942, the *Cushing* led a squadron into Indispensable Strait southeast of Salvo Island to intercept a Japanese convoy escorted by two battleships, a heavy cruiser and eleven destroyers. In the darkness, the warships became intermingled. Three Japanese destroyers approached within 1200 yards and at one point got so close that small arms fire was used by both sides. The *Cushing* opened fire on a destroyer and launched a torpedo at the cruiser. The dark of the early morning was lit with searchlights and bursts from star shells. The torpedo tubes on the *Cushing's* port side went out of commission just about the time a Japanese destroyer approached and turned its lights on the *Cushing*. Lt. Nottingham was directing fire on another enemy destroyer and was hitting it so heavily that it was believed that it never fired a shot. The approaching Japanese destroyer opened fire at close range and one of the shells struck the gun director's area wounding or killing most of the men. Lt. Nottingham was thrown down to the bridge. While it appeared that he was only slightly wounded, he was suffering from the shock of the fall and slightly dazed. Two of the bridge crew were ordered to take him to the doctor in the wardroom (battle dressing station). Before the doctor had an opportunity to examine the lieutenant, a shell hit the wardroom. Fire erupted and although injured himself, the doctor supervised the removal of the surviving wounded to the main deck where they were placed in life rafts when the ship was abandoned. None of the survivors recalled seeing the lieutenant being placed in a life raft. At 3:15 a.m., less than two

hours after the battle began, the captain ordered the crew to abandon ship. Shortly thereafter the Japanese force withdrew, abandoning its attempt to reinforce and resupply its troops on Guadalcanal. The next morning, the *Cushing's* survivors were picked up by another ship. The *Cushing* sank in the afternoon after its magazine exploded. Seventy men were reported killed or missing in action. The *Cushing* and her men had aided in the eventual capture of Guadalcanal, but the ship and a portion of its crew went to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean as a result.

The Navy Department notified the Nottinghams that their son was listed as missing in action. However no details on the battle, ship, or the son's duty were released for fear that it would aid the enemy. It was not until 7 January 1943, that Mr. Nottingham learned the details of his son's service and death. The *Cushing's* skipper, Commander Edward Parker, wrote to Mr. Nottingham, "I know that you would rather I tell you the whole story as I saw it rather than hold out, what are truthfully, in my opinion, false hopes." Commander Parker continued, "That your son was doing his duty in the service of our country may be some recompense at this time."

A memorial marker was placed in the family plot in Graham Cemetery. At St. Thomas Episcopal Church, he is listed along with William Barton Mason and William Breckenridge Grymes on the stained-glass War Memorial window dedicated to the memory of St. Thomas members killed in World War II. After serving three years with the 90th Bomb Group, 5th Air Force in the Southwest Pacific and upon his graduation from the University of Virginia Law School, Severn Nottingham's cousin, Atwell Somerville, joined the senior Mr. Nottingham to form the Orange law firm of Nottingham and Somerville. Now retired, Mr. Somerville, a founder and dedicated member of the Historical Society, lives in Orange.

### Historical Society Board 2013

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## From Fairgrounds to Factory: Snead and Company, Virginia Metal Products, Virginia Metal Industries

*Barbara Vines Little*

A triangular tract of land lying on the Old Gordonsville Road just south of Orange is known to many residents as the Virginia Metal Products property (now Virginia Metal Industries). The manufacturing facility was originally part of Snead and Company. However, its history begins with an earlier organization. About 1922, VPI extension agent, E. V. Breeden, began pushing for a county fairground. He was successful and on 15 August 1924 the Orange County Fair Association purchased 19.38 acres lying three-fourths of a mile southwest of the Town of Orange at the junction of the Orange Gordonsville Highway and the C & O Railroad for \$3876 from Mrs. W. G. Crenshaw. The association then borrowed \$6000 to construct an exhibition hall, promising to repay the loan with the "net income from the lease or rental of spaces."<sup>1</sup> The Exhibit Hall, a large two-story building housed the Silk Mill demonstration display by Mr. Rubin<sup>2</sup> on the first floor.<sup>3</sup> The local fireman's band played for dances on Saturday nights on the second floor. In the Society's files is an advertisement for one of the Fair's "special" dances, which was to be preceded by a special style show and dance review. According to the Society's records participants in the style show were Miss Dorcas Andrews, Miss Bruce Boxley, Miss Charlene Williams, Mrs. L. W. Eshelman, Miss Mary McIntosh, Miss Virginia Winn Boxley, Miss Mollie Lerner and Miss Viva Boxley of Orange; Miss Martha Scott and Mrs. Marshall Cowherd of Gordonsville; Miss Emelyn Mills and Miss Mary Houff of Madison; Miss Hazel Duff of Mine Run and the Hon. George L. Browning, Messrs. Fayette Young, Marshall Newton, Byrd Smith, Billy Smith, Paul Carpenter, Francis Browning, Tom Bond and Victor Bedford. Although its activities may have been popular with local citizens, the Fair Association struggled financially; it finally defaulted on its loan and the building and grounds were sold at public auction to W. D. Roberts for \$3600.<sup>4</sup> Less than a year later, on 15 August 1936 Roberts sold the property to Snead, Inc.<sup>5</sup>

**ORANGE FAIR DANCES**  
October 22-23-24-25

Style Show Dance Revue

To a selected list of dances in Richmond, Charlottesville, Culpeper, Warrenton, Fredericksburg, Orange and surrounding country.

*Dear Dancer:*

You have either attended or heard of the splendid dances which have been held at Orange during the past two years. Orchestras of National reputation and floor regulations with adequate chaperonage and the backing of our best people is the reason.

This year, on October 22, 23, 24 and 25, we are going to put on an even better dance than we have ever had before, and we want you to come and bring your crowd. We have arranged to have Happy Felton and his 'Pep' Boys Orchestra, an eleven piece dance band, booked through the Music Corporation of America. Happy Felton organized and conducted the Silvertown Card Orchestra, of Radio fame, and now has his 'Pep' Boys in Atlantic City where they are playing at the Auditorium, one of the "World's 'Playground's" largest dance floors.

Happy was a four letter man at Allegheny College, a member of the Alpha Chi (Rho) fraternity, has had several years on Broadway in musical comedy and vaudeville, and is a feature of unusual merit. You cannot afford to miss this opportunity to dance on our 90x36 dance floor.

The chaperons this year are, Mrs. V. R. Shackelford, Mrs. A. Stuart Robertson, Mrs. Anna T. Burgess, Mrs. P. S. Boxley, Mrs. H. C. Warren, and Mrs. L. S. Macon, of Orange, and Mrs. N. A. Linsay and Mrs. C. T. Neale, of Gordonsville.

Dancing will start promptly at nine-thirty, before which, at eight o'clock, we will stage a ten-gal Revue, Society Style Show and Vaudeville. The Style Show will have as models fourteen local buds and matrons, together with six local young men who will show the season's latest dress creations. The 'Pearl Haines' Revue and other 'Vaudeville' features will contribute to an hour and a quarter of snappy entertainment.

The dances will continue 'till 1:30 A. M., and the price will be \$2.00. Dance tickets will be sold at the Front Gate after 9:00, so there will be no extra gate admissions to get to the floor after this hour.

For those desiring to see the 'Revue, etc., the price will be 50c, but the dance ticket bought before 8 P. M. will entitle the holder to the balcony without further cost.

Fireworks will be exhibited at 7:30 Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and will be of the usual high quality. Come early, see the 'Best County Fair in the State and we promise you the time of your life.

Yours very truly,  
ORANGE FAIR ASSOCIATION, Inc.

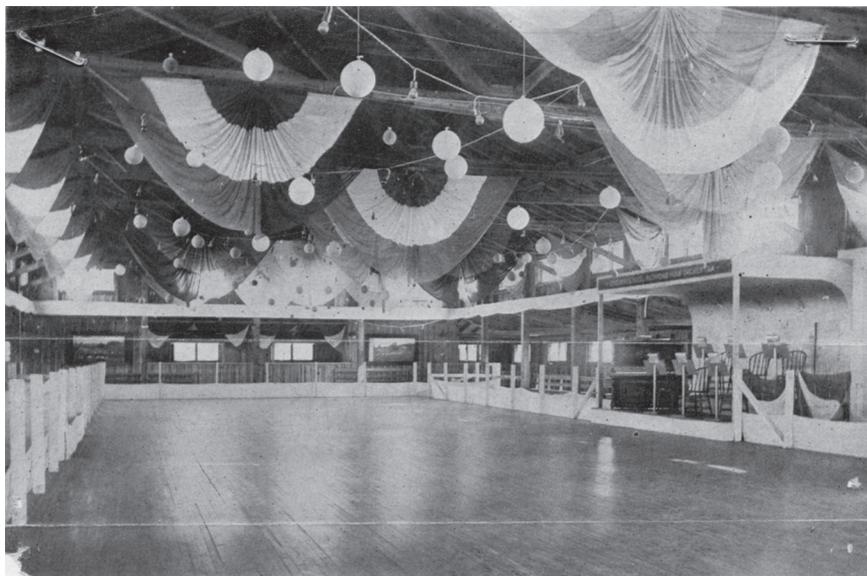
<sup>1</sup> Orange County Deed Book 90, p. 252, 94, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Milton Rubin was the president of American Silk Mills, a local textile manufacturer and a major area employer.

<sup>3</sup> If you have any information about the Silk Mill demonstration, please share it with the Historical Society by mail, phone, or email ([info@orangecovahist.org](mailto:info@orangecovahist.org)).

<sup>4</sup> Orange County Deed Book 108, p. 140.

<sup>5</sup> Orange County Deed Book 109, p. 201.



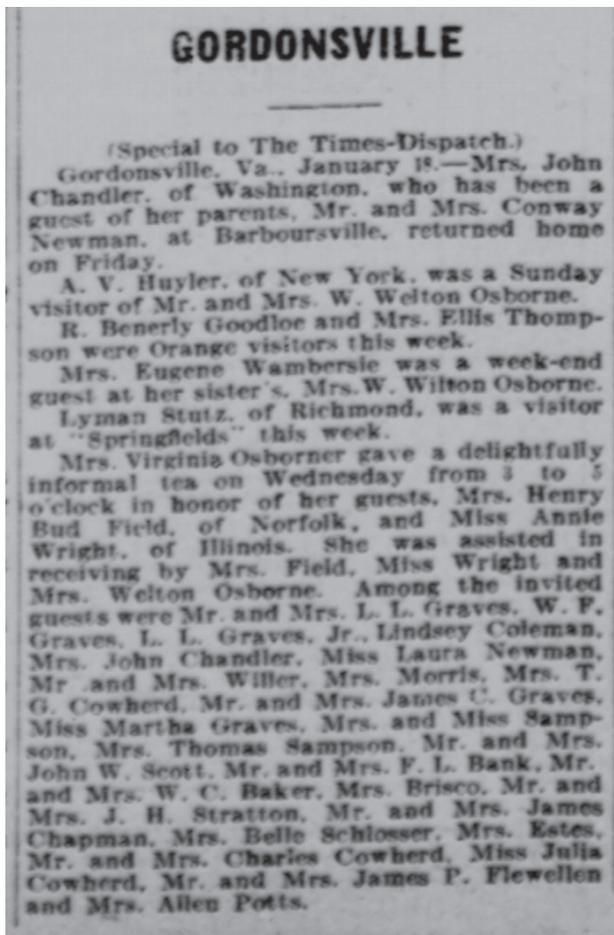
Second-floor dance hall at the Orange County Fairgrounds.

Orange County Historical Society  
130 Caroline Street  
Orange, VA 22960

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## Gordonsville Gossip 100 Years Ago

As Gordonsville celebrates its bicentennial this year, we thought it would be fun to show a glimpse of activity 100 years ago, as presented in this gossip column from the January 19, 1913 issue of the Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, found at *Chronicling America* (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038615/1913-01-19/ed-1/seq-33/>).



## Please Join Us!

We invite you to join the Orange County Historical Society. Please provide your name and contact information as you wish it to appear in our records and select the appropriate dues level. Mail the completed form, along with your dues payment to The Orange County Historical Society (OCHS), to 130 Caroline Street, Orange, VA 22960.

The Orange County Historical Society is a non-profit organization. Your membership fees are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(If business/organization member, name of business or organization)

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Status:  New  Renewal  Address, name, etc. update

Would you be willing to receive meeting notices via email in lieu of a postcard?  Yes  No

Membership Level: Society dues are for the period of January 1 - December 31.

Annual Individual Member: \$20

Annual Student Member (High School or College): \$12.50

Annual Family Member: \$30

Annual Sustaining Member: \$100

Annual Patron Member: \$200

Annual Sponsor Member: \$300