



# Gateway to the West



Lee County Historical and Genealogical Society P. O. Box 231 Jonesville, Virginia 24263-023

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*President's Report.....1*

*The Ad Warner Story....1*

*Laningham and Poore  
Funeral Home.....3*

*Steven Starnes.....4*

*Love Wins In The End  
by Chester Bays.....5*

*Member Chester Bays  
Passes.....6*

*Note: If you would like to  
comment on anything in  
this newsletter please do  
so in an email to the  
historical society. Our  
email address is:  
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## President's Report

*By Becky Jones*



Here it is time again for our newsletter. It seems like it has been no time since our last one. The Lee County Historical and Genealogical Society I believe is doing great. We have several great people who really help keep us going. With Life memberships, donations, and a grant, we are doing well.

We talked about the Radar (CPR) survey of the Poor Farm in January. As our reports come in you will hear more about this. In February, Steven Starnes spoke to us about the relics he had found in Lee Co over the past twenty years, and the relics he found from the Battle of Jonesville. (See Starnes comments page 3.)

Mountain Empire Community College has a mountain music program Tyler Hughs, an incredibly talented young man enlightened us with local mountain songs. Even the town of Ben Hur has a song.

Your president got her Saturdays mixed up and by the time I realized it was too late to join for the meeting. For our May meeting Greg Edwards gave us an informative talk about Dr. Thomas Walker's journey through southwest Virginia in 1775. At our June meeting, Dale Edwards talked about the Geographical Information System for the county which the public can use free of charge.

*Continued on page 2*

## *The Ad Warner Story* by Ken Roddenberry

On the 3rd of December 1870 the Overseers of the Poor in Lee Co. paid William R. Graham \$3.00 to make a coffin for "Ad Warner, col'd". This is the only reference to this person in the overseers of the poor. Who was Ad Warner? What was his story? From the foregoing record of the overseers, Ad Warner died sometime before 1870. The Lee County Death registry does not list Ad Warner, nor do the Ancestry or FamilySearch websites have any record of his death. Is this a 'dead-end'? (No pun intended) Had his death occurred after the 1870 census then there may have been a record of him in Lee County. Was his name mentioned anywhere else in the record? Yes it was.

The Lee Co. grand jury indicted him on a charge of petit larceny on March 17th 1868. Ad Warner, a freedman, "placed himself at the mercy of the country" but the case was continued until the next May term. On April 20th 1868, the court assigned him to Daniel W. Martin, Overseer of the Public Road, for road maintenance duty required of all males over the age of 16 unless exempted. On May 17th 1869, the Lee Co. Court heard the case of the *Commonwealth against "Add" Warner* but dismissed the indictment based on the defendant "having departed this life". Sadly, Ad Warner's death occurred between April 20th 1868 and May 17th 1869. There were two Warner brothers who were slave owners in Lee Co., one of whom may have been the owner of Ad Warner. They were Ira Warner (1802-1862) and his brother Choral (Porter) Warner (1808-1861).

*Continued on page 3*

***President's Report*** from page 1*Dolores Ham and LCGHS President Becky Jones**Steven Starnes*

I was able to go to the dedication of the Research Room at the Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail Interpretive Center in Duffield, VA on May 21, 2023. They had a dedication ceremony, exhibits and refreshments.

At the May meeting of Major George Gibson Chapter of the DAR, Dolores Ham drove up from Knoxville, TN to donate a book to the Lee County Historical Society. She and her late husband had worked for years to get this book done. (The Speak/e/s Family of Southern Maryland). Dolores is descendent of Nicholas Speaks and a life member of our society.

Violet Jean Martin, one of our local members, has donated books from the Scott County Historical Society, "Yesterday in Scott County." These books will go into our library for research use.

Thank you for your interest and support. Our dues are still \$10.00 per year and life membership is \$100.00. You are invited to attend our meeting if you are in the area on the 2nd Saturday of each month at 2 pm at the old Friendship Baptist Church building at 554 Old Friendship Road, Jonesville, Virginia.

*Guest Speaker Dale Edwards**Tyler Hughs*



## *The Ad Warner Story* by Ken Roddenberry – Continued from page 1

Both owned enslaved persons in 1850 in Lunenburg Co., Va. but removed to the lower Wallens Creek area of Lee Co. about 1854 (Lee Co. Deed Bk). In the 1860 US Federal Slave Schedule, Ira Warner listed seven enslaved persons: three females (35, \_\_, \_\_) and four males 17, 17, \_\_, and 2. The two 17 year old males were noted as 'fugitives of the State' implying that they were freedom seekers. Upon the death of Ira Warner his personal property was appraised on the 8th day of March 1862 and listed the following enslaved persons: 1 girl (named) 'Pup' \$800.00; 1 girl Harriet \$600.00; 1 girl Mary \$500.00; 1 girl Milly \$500.00; 1 girl Sall \$450.00; 1 boy (named) Floid \$400.00; 1 boy Dick \$1000.00; 1 boy Add \$1000.00.

Ad Warner appears to have been an enslaved person of Ira Warner. We can say with confidence that he was born about 1842-43 and may have been born in Lunenburg Co., Va. In the 1850 US Federal Slave Schedule, Ira Warner listed fifteen enslaved persons, the oldest, a female 60. There were two males, both 8, and one might have been Ad Warner.

Ad's mother may have been Mary mentioned in the appraisal of Ira Warner's personal property. In the 1870 Lee Co. census Mary Warner, 46, was in the household of Richard Warner, 25, b. Charlotte Co., Va. and Rebecca Warner, 23, b. Lee Co. I believe Richard was 'Dick' in the appraisal as Ad's brother and Floyd, 12, also in this household appears to be his sibling. All of this information tells a story of an African-American man who lived a short, hard life and died at the youthful age of 26 years old. His burial location is unknown. [If you, the reader, would like to comment on this article please do so by emailing the Historical Society.]

## *Laningham and Poore Funeral Home* by Ken Roddenberry

James Elliott Laningham of Pennington Gap established himself as an "undertaker of record" in 1914. He was the first licensed embalmer in Lee County having received his training at the Cincinnati College of Embalming.

James E. "Jim" Laningham (1884-1964) was the son of John Thomas Laningham, a Methodist minister, and Sarah Paralee Bailey. He married (1) Leona Grabeel in 1909 and had one child, Glenn (1911-1952); he married (2) Anne Martin "Annie" Wynn, daughter of John C.B. and Henrietta Browning Wynn, of Campground, west of Jonesville, in 1914. They had four children: John Wynn, Billy Browning, James Elliott Thomas, and Mary Anne.

His parents helped organize the Methodist Episcopal Church in Pennington Gap and gave the pipe organ [which is still in use today]. (p. 211, *Early Settlers of Lee Co. Va. & Adj. Counties*, Vol. 1).



*J. & E. Laningham mosaic tile threshold.  
Photo courtesy of Charlie Culbertson.*

Jim and his brother Earl Cranston (1886-1964) were proprietors in the hardware and motor vehicle businesses. Earl earned his law degree from the University of Richmond and practiced in Lee County. He was a silent partner in some of his brother's companies and even played the pipe organ at Pennington Methodist. Between 1914 and 1919, Jim Laningham bought several lots in the town of Pennington Gap fronting Railroad and Kentucky Avenues. He and Earl established the J. & E. Laningham stores in Pennington Gap and St. Charles and were dealers in hardware, household goods, coffins, and burial robes. They advertised their wares, letter-painted, on the side of their building (p. 133 *Lee Co. Va.: A Pictorial History*) and regularly in the *Powell Valley News*. Local advertisements for funeral homes and directors, seemingly, would not appear until the 1930's. James Elliott Thomas Laningham, b. 1927 and affectionately called "Jim Tom" recalled (6/2-9/20: phone & emails) that his father would open early in the morning so the coal miners "could pick their supplies needed" before their day's shift. Miners would buy carbide for their headlamps and sometimes dynamite that was stored "safely out of town" on the Burgin farm. His father would have an employee manage the store while he went to the mines. He was the Superintendent at the Black Mountain Coal Co. (see p. 73 *Lee Co., Va.: A Pictorial History*)

The Laningham mortuary business was conducted on the second floor of the Nash Automobile business, later changed to the Ford Motor Company, on the then Railroad Avenue (now North Main). "Dad," Jim Tom said, "would drive the hearse into the garage service department to the back where he would place the hearse on an elevator and ascend to the second floor."

***Laningham and Poore Funeral Home*** *continued from page 3*

Here he would prep the body for embalming. Customers and relatives would access the second floor from a set of enclosed stairs on the side of the building. He had a separate room for the deceased relatives to view a selection of caskets. Once the body was prepared and a coffin selected, he would take the body to the home of the deceased or where the family wished, where a “wake” was held, followed by the funeral and burial. As a young boy, Jim Tom and his brothers played where the caskets were stored and had many “hair-raising” experiences, he said.

In 1923 J.E. Laningham sold his hardware business to Mark S. Culbertson, who moved back to Lee County from Detroit, Michigan where he worked for Ford Motor Company. Laningham retained ownership of the building and rented it to Culbertson who changed the name to Pennington Hardware. He was joined by his son, Charlie, in 1965. They kept their store in the same building until 1985. (Charlie Culbertson 6/3/20)

Elmer F. Poore joined J.E. Laningham in the funeral business about 1923. They were known as **Laningham and Poore** funeral directors. Poore was a native of Wise County and was living in St. Charles, Virginia at that time. Elmer received his license to embalm about 1930 and served families in the St. Charles area.

Hearses served dual purposes. They were used to transport the body of the deceased and transport people to the hospital. The medical center of the day was the Norton Hospital. Jim Tom said that his dad “was not satisfied” with the lack of a hospital in Pennington Gap. His dad and a group of investors formed a company and built a “hospital and a nursing home” and called it Lee General Hospital. J.E. Laningham was not satisfied with the staffing at the new hospital and led a movement to bring a surgeon to Lee General. After an invitation to look over the new hospital and much “arm twisting”, Dr. G.B. Seltzer came to Lee General Hospital where he served until his retirement. He died at the place of his birth, Newberry, S.C. in 1987 at 92.

On Sept. 19, 1935, Laningham and Poore announced in the *Powell Valley News* that they had sold their funeral business at Pennington Gap and St. Charles to R.C. Bishop, L.D. Cunningham, C.E. Grabeel, and F.L. Grabeel *who will continue to serve the public at the same locations under the style name of **Lee Funeral Home***. Laningham and Poore had been in the funeral business for nearly 25 years. Elmer Poore removed to Dickenson County and established the Clintwood Funeral Home in 1937 where he was the funeral director until 1959. He sold the business to Ferris Colley who changed the name to Clintwood-Colley Funeral Home.

***Steven Starnes comments to LCGHS***

I have researched the Civil War in SWVA and NETN for over thirty years, focusing primarily on operations within Lee County. I began mapping and excavating relics in the Jonesville area about twenty years ago, focusing on confirming operational reports from participating Confederate and Union officers. I have excavated and mapped hundreds of artifacts from the site of the battle of Jonesville and from Union and Confederate camps within the Jonesville area.

My primary focus in my college training was on Engineering Geology and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Despite that educational focus I took as many history classes as I could while still in college, as well as several more classes after I finished college. My understanding of history, geology and GIS have been heavily relied on in the research, excavation, and mapping of the Battle of Jonesville.

Every artifact tells a story of its own, such as, “Is the bullet dropped or fired, or what type of bullet is it”? The artifacts collectively tell what forces occupied a position, if they were receiving return fire, and what weapons they were armed with. I was fortunate that much of the core battlefield had remained undeveloped in the century and half since the battle. That allowed for a fairly complete mapping of the primary Confederate advances as well as much of the Union defensive positions.

Much of what I have uncovered has confirmed the order of events for officers of both sides as recorded in “The Official Records of the Rebellion”. In addition to the order of events, the excavations and mapping have given a spatial conformation to much of their whereabouts on the battlefield. The official reports are generally pretty vague geographically, but thanks to the excavations and mapping I have been able to develop a better picture of where many of the described events of the battle occurred. I have also found relics in areas that don’t entirely conform to what was expected, such as a colonial period site that has become a separate study of its own.

The large civil war battles of Northern Virginia are well documented and have been the subject of countless books and documentaries, while in our distant end of the state Lee County’s most famous battle has had relatively little written about it or research done on it. I am hopeful that my research, excavations, and mapping contribute to a better understanding of what the events were on January 3, 1864 in Jonesville, Virginia.



***Love Wins In The End*** *by Chester I. Bays*

An 1876 entry appears in Scott County, VA, marriage book 2, page 50, line 22, showing a marriage license was issued to Cena Malinda Bays, age 17, and Patton Nichols, age 22 and, written out to the side in small letters, is a notation "not returned". We knew she was married only once, to Squire Head, so I turned to a California cousin, Mary Smith Bays, then age 104, and asked her the reason, along with a number of other questions. She answered on the cassette tape, as requested, and she answered as if it all happened last year and everybody should know the answer.

Cena's parents were William H. "Fiddling Billy" Bays and Elizabeth Morgan Bays. Cena Malinda was their seventh child. When Cena was age 17 she began attracting a lot of attention from Patton Nichols, age 22, but she was also attracting attention of Squire Head, age 21. Beyond that, we don't know the details.

Patton Nichols won out. It appears that the endorsement of Nichols by Cena's parents trumped everything else. Wedding plans were made. The marriage license was obtained, and the wedding was planned for the following Sunday after church at her parents' home. The minister was to come directly to their home after services

Only a few family friends were invited. A meal was on the table for all to enjoy as soon as the wedding service was over. The occasion could be regarded as both a wedding and a reception.

Young Nichols was being congratulated by family friends in attendance, while Cena was in her bedroom with her best friend, Margaret, who, if this were a more structured wedding, would be regarded as a bride's maid.

As Cena was making some last-minute adjustments to her wedding dress, little was being said. Margaret then abruptly inquired, "Cena, are you sure this is what you want to do?" Cena responded that it was, and then volunteered that Patton was a good worker and she believed he would take good care of her, and then she went on to say, "and my parents believe he will make me a good husband."

That answer did not satisfy Margaret, who inquired again, this time being more specific, "Cena, is the man you really love?" Cena's response was, "No, I can learn to love him, and my parents think he is a good man, but the man I really love is Squire Head" Margaret answered, "Cena, Squire Head is waiting for you on top of the hill with two horses.." With little more said, the two of them raised the bedroom window as silently as they could and Cena slipped out, still wearing her wedding dress, and ran toward the top of the hill as fast as she could run.

Court records show Squire and Cena were married over in the next county, Washington County, on Feb. 22, 1876, the next day, Monday. Cena's own choice seemed to be the better choice. Squire was liked by everyone. He was elected tax assessor of Scott County and served as long as he chose to run for the office.



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## ***Member Chester Bays Passes Away***



*Chester I. Bays*

Chester I. Bays passed away on May 25 at Greenwood Nursing Home. He was born in 1928, in Hubbard Springs, now Jonesville, VA, the oldest of 5 children, born to Robert W. Bays and Nora Young Bays. He graduated from Flatwood High School in 1944 at age 15 and worked at various clerical positions for the L&N Railroad for the succeeding 5 years, and until age 20.

He then enrolled in Bowling Green College of Commerce in 1949, and completed 2 years after which he transferred to the University of Virginia for 1 year of college and 1 year of law school.

He was called up during the Korean war and after basic training, leadership school, and officers candidate school and was transferred to the Army reserves.

Thereafter, he settled in Louisville, married and worked full time in various positions with Middlewest Freightways, while, at same time, attending University of Louisville School of Law. He graduated in 1958 with degrees of BSL and LLB (JD) degrees. Thereafter he lectured at University of Louisville School of Law on the "brochure method of tort resolution.

He moved to Bowling Green in 1959 and opened his office as a sole practitioner where he practiced for 40 years, and was a part-time professor at Western Kentucky University. In 1999, he closed his full-time office but, in the succeeding 20 years, engaged in estate practice only.

Over the years, he belonged to the Jaycees, Civitan Club, Noon Lions Club, American Legion, all York Rite Masonic bodies, Shrine, and was Past Master of Bowling Green Lodge #73 F&AM and District Deputy Grand Master for Kentucky. He was the first president of Bowling Green HI 12 Club, first president of the Bowling Green Association for Retarded Children, twice president of the Southern Kentucky Genealogical Society, was president of the Warren County Historical Society, and was a member of the First Christian Church, where he taught Sunday school for many years.

His hobbies were that of historical research, and writing, genealogical research, and writing, and that of an amateur musician and singer, and music collecting.

He was first married to Anneliese Heidelberger, mother of his children, now deceased. He was next married to Jean Dial Wilkes, widow of Dr. Marcus B. Wilkes now deceased.

He was predeceased in death by sisters, Mardell Bays Helton and Anita Bays Johnson and brother Herman A. Bays, He is survived by his four sons, David Bays of Dawson Springs, KY, Dr. Harold Bays of Louisville, KY, Daniel R. Bays and Alan R. Bays of Bowling Green and sister Celesta Bays Hensley of Jonesville, Virginia three grandchildren and a numerous nieces and nephews.

Funeral services are provided by J.C. Kirby with cremation chosen. No local memorial services will be observed, but a grave site memorial service will be held at a later date with burial in the Hubbard Springs Christian Church Cemetery.