

THE HEADSTONE

Vol. I

June 2023

Issue VI

Rather than talk about the Spring weather that just can't fully commit, or complain about the grass that yells cut me, cut me at least once a week now, I thought I would just be thankful for the blessings we all have and seek your assistance on a matter involving genealogical investigation - of a forensic nature.

I located the headstone of E. E. Lotts well into the cemetery cleanup process in the spring of 2022. Although still erect, it lacked about five inches of being completely covered. To add to its concealment, an Autumn Olive had taken root right beside it and had actually started to envelope the left side of the stone. I have included a photo of E. E. Lotts' headstone below which I will ask you to study in a moment, but first, a little about her.

The research on E. E. Lotts was and continues to be difficult. I have pasted below an excerpt of what I documented on her last year as part of the book I am writing, *Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery "Silent Stories" Vol. I*. I know a little more since I documented my research for the book but the work on her is by no means complete.

From the book:

Inscription: (As inscribed)

WIFe OF

JOSePH

LOTTs

E E. LOTTs

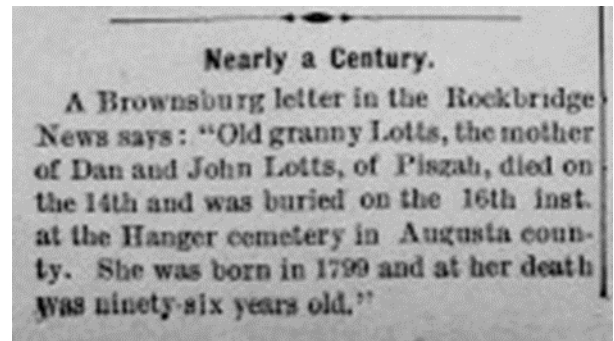
SHe Died

MAy THe 14 1895

HeR Age 97



This is a headstone that had not been previously recorded at Dutch Hollow. Only the top four or five inches were visible once we got the area cleared and to make matters more difficult, an autumn olive trunk had started to grow around it. The obituary at right of E. E., or Elizabeth Lotts, was found with the help of my friend and neighbor, Al Wilkerson. I believe based on census records and the names on the obelisk headstone beside Elizabeth, that Dan in the obituary should actually be David. I cannot find a Dan in Elizabeth's history but that is not to say that I am correct and the article is not. Joseph E. Lotts 1802-1871, Elizabeth's husband, lists himself as a shoemaker on the 1850 Census. He was the son of John Lotts 1769-1856 and Eve Almarode 1785-1860. John and Eve were married March 11, 1799, and John was the brother of none other than George Lotts, who married Elizabeth Bright. You may have stopped wondering by now why I started this chapter with Maria Kaufelt Bright. If the obituary and the headstone are correct, I can say that every public record conflicts with her date of birth. Take that for what it is worth.



The graves of three people believed to be E. E. Lotts' children are marked by an obelisk which is immediately beside the grave of E. E. Lotts. The links below are for their markers.

[Elizabeth Lotts](#) [John Lotts](#) [David Lotts](#)

To better illustrate some of the difficulties encountered while researching "Old Granny Lotts", I have included more excerpts from the book that relates directly to her. More from the book:

Inscription:

ELIZABETH A. LOTTS BORN DEC. 11, 1823 DIED MAY 14, 1895

This Elizabeth died the same day and year as Elizabeth, Joseph's wife, which has made research difficult to say the least. The 1870 Census shows that Elizabeth, listed as age 50, and John H., age 18 are living with Joseph Lotts. This would make her date of birth 1820, not 1823, although given the margin of error for that time, that date could still be correct. That all sounds great until you look at the 1850 census. It lists Joseph Lotts being born in 1804. Other records have 1801 or 1802 so again, 1804 is not a stretch because the date of birth is not listed on the census but is extrapolated from the age, which is listed. David is listed as fourteen, which would match his headstone date of 1836 perfectly, and John was not born until 1851, after the census was taken. But then we come to Elizabeth, the daughter. She is listed as age nine, which would make her birth year roughly 1840 or 1841. This date in no way fits the headstone birthdate. Back to Granny Lotts, to create further confusion, Betsy, listed right after Joseph on the census, whom I can only conclude is Elizabeth (Granny Lotts) is listed as forty, which makes her date of birth 1810. 1810 is a common date on other records for her but it makes her age on the 1850 census conflict with the age on the 1870 census! It's off by ten years if it is the same person. Could Elizabeth's (wife of Joseph) date of birth, i.e., age, be off that much on the headstone and the newspaper? It could, but I find it hard to accept. If you disregard the headstone date and the newspaper, all the other records indicate that Granny Lotts was born in 1810. Records have her marrying Joseph in 1824, but she would have been fourteen and he twenty-two. Some records also show a child born to her in 1824. And short of some document being examined in the future

to prove one date or the other, that as they say, is the long and the short of it. Ditto for Elizabeth A. Lotts.

Inscription:

JOHN LOTTS BORN AUG. 15, 1851 DIED SEPT. 16, 1896

John H. Lotts, son of Joseph and Elizabeth, was the only child still living with them in 1870 and was listed as a laborer. Find A Grave shows John H. Lotts as the son of Joseph and Elizabeth Dotson Lotts and David L. Lotts as his brother born 1836 and dying 1908. Both John's and David's birth and death dates in Find A Grave match the John and David on the obelisk. The problem is, as stated in their suspected mother's history, if the obituary and headstone for her are correct, she was 51 years old when John was born. If everyone else is correct with the birth date of 1810, she would have been 41. Not that she couldn't have birthed a child at age 51. John is listed on the death register as having died in Pisgah from blood poisoning. The Rockbridge County News, Vol. 12, Number 43, September 1896 had the following: "John Lotts of Pisgah, is lying critically ill at his home. He was pulling weeds in his corn and stuck a briar in his finger; from it inflammation set in, then blood poison, and all hopes of his recovery have been abandoned." He is also listed as dying on September 15. The headstone says September 16. David Lotts, listed as his brother, served as the informant for the information. John is also listed as a widower. Even though he is listed as a widower, and could have been, he was still listed as living with 80-year-old Elizabeth on the 1880 census. He was 27. If we accept that this is his mother, Joseph's wife, then we are back to 1800, which arguably matches the headstone and newspaper article for Granny. The best result of this research is in my opinion, to list the data found, highlight the discrepancies, and allow the reader, hopefully family descendants with more information than me, to draw their own conclusions.

Inscription:

DAVID LOTTS BORN APR. 12, 1836 DIED MAY 4, 1908

David Lotts, if my research is correct, was the son of Joseph and Elizabeth Lotts. He married Mary Jane Lucas February 2, 1863, in the town of Lexington, Va. Yet by her own affidavit for widow's pension Mary Jane states she was married in Feb. 1862. Marriage Register versus her own words, which is correct? The Virginia Marriage Register 1853-1935 lists Mary Jane's parents as Abraham and Peggy Lucas. David listed his occupation as farmer. They had at least six children between 1863 and 1891. David was drafted and served for the South in the 27th Infantry, Company D. He was wounded in the ankle from a gunshot at Port Republic on June 9, 1862. He was paroled on May 29, 1865. He applied for partial disability due to the effects of the gunshot wound to the right ankle and on May 11, 1900, was awarded fifteen dollars annually. Mary Jane Lucas is buried at New Providence Church in Rockbridge County. She answered the question "What is your age?" on the Civil War widow's pension request with "I don't know my age but think I am sixty-four." This answer evidences why so many of the date records for so many folks back then are all over the place. It was only a guess from the original source, and when the person is deceased, it becomes anyone's guess, literally.

Now, having completely confused you to the point of no return, I will now request your assistance in examining E.E. Lotts' headstone. I call your attention to the L and the two Ts in her

last name. Both the L and the Ts have dual parallel lines cut into the stone vertically to form the letters. The photo below is an enlargement of the letters in question.



Now, take a look at a stone that I found on August 20, 2022. Actually, I “found” the stone on October 2, 2021 but because it was partially covered on each end with soil, I concluded it was an exposed rock ledge. As mowing and weed-eating took away the dirt at the ends the following year, I realized it was a rock without the ledge! I stopped the mower, looked closer, and discovered that there was an inscription on the rock. After it was reset where it



was found and then cleaned, I discovered it to be marked with J. Lotts, Age (illegible). I will note that I have always suspected the age inscription to be 68. (Trust me, if you look at it long enough, I think it becomes any number you want it to be!) Then it was in April of 2023 that I came to the realization that the age, when observed using oblique lighting, could actually be 68 or 69....or an 88, or 89. I have not ruled out using ultra-violet lighting on the age inscription to see if that helps. We will see. The other thing that got my attention that same day in April was the fact that the person who inscribed J. Lotts' stone also used parallel lines in the vertical aspect of the letters L and the two Ts. In addition, the argument could be made that the ends of the horizontal part of the two T letters on both stones are very similar, terminating with downward pointing "triangles." Also, the Ts on both stones have bases that protrude outward in similar fashion.

Joseph Lotts, the husband of Old Granny Lotts, was born according to public records, 15 May 1802 and died 27 August 1871. He was 69 years old when he died. Is he the J. Lotts marked by the stone? We will probably never know the answer to that question. But could the same person have inscribed both E. E. Lotts' stone and J. Lotts' stone? I will let you answer that question for yourself. We will never know when the stones were inscribed and set in relation to their death dates, but we do know that Joseph died 24 years before Elizabeth. I am not trying to make more of this hypothesis than exists, but these are the kind of clues that can eventually lead to answers....or more questions. The cemetery is full of interesting things such as this, well, interesting to me at least, and in the next newsletter I will share another similar case and seek your opinion.

If anyone is willing to take a look at Old Granny Lotts' genealogy and help me better piece together her story, particularly involving Joseph and her children, I would really appreciate it. Like, I would really, really, appreciate it! Just email your thoughts, questions or findings.

Department of Historical Resources Augusta County Archaeological Site Surveys

In this newsletter we take a look at Buffalo School House, also called Buffalo Springs Schoolhouse.

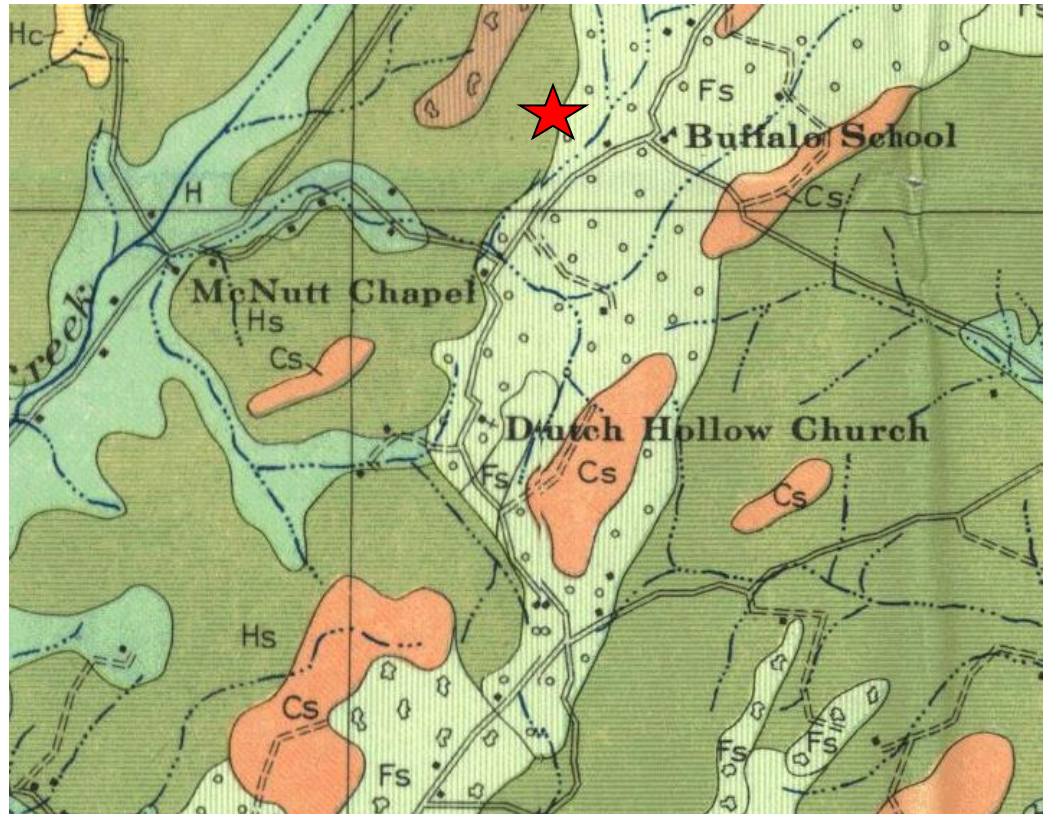
My father told me over fifty years ago that a schoolhouse once set at the corner of Broadhead School Road and Wagon Shop Road, back then called Dutch Hollow Road, in line of sight with the graveyard, but I noticed no evidence of a schoolhouse at that time. He called it Buffalo School. Again, I blame adolescence for not asking more questions, but I never forgot what he told me.

Some years later I happened to be looking at an old Augusta County highway map and right there at that intersection was a square with a flag in it. I looked hopefully at the legend and sure enough, that was the symbol for a school! I got permission



to look around the site and located four huge rocks situated to form the corners of a rectangle. Rocks that I later determined had supported the four corners of the schoolhouse. I asked my neighbor who had a metal detector to come and check the site. He found what I have been told is an old Model A car jack. It was right where the schoolhouse would have been. I cleaned it up and it still works! A picture of it is on the preceding page. This is the same neighbor, Kenny Reed, that found the coffin handle in the graveyard a few months back. You just can't beat good neighbors. Yes, I have digressed, but you really can't.

Decades went by and my interest in the old schoolhouse waned, right up until I started working on the graveyard cleanup and researching all things Dutch Hollow. I found various references to the schoolhouse which supported the location my father had told me it was but nothing absolute. Then one day I was looking for information on another historical site in the same geographical area and ended up in the University of Alabama online archives website. The only thing I



found there was a 1932 Augusta County soil survey map. Just as I was about to click the exit button, I decided to take a look at what kind of good soil I don't have and there it was, Buffalo Schoolhouse, marked right there on that soil survey map. Location confirmed! (I have marked the map with a red star to signify the location of the cemetery in relation to the schoolhouse)

I met with my neighbor whose grandfather and later on his uncle had once owned the land where the schoolhouse was and was informed by him that the schoolhouse was still in existence! My neighbor's grandfather had cut the building in half sometime in the mid-1940s, moved it over a mile in two sections to his farm, and reconstructed it to serve as a tenant house for his farm hand. About a year ago I put together a short history of what I have learned about the schoolhouse and that can be found on the website in the members section Library / Archives under *Unpublished Documents*. The full research includes a photo of the current structure, some newspaper articles, and a copy of a pertinent deed. A small portion of that research is below. (In italics)

Buffalo School House is now located on Wagon Shop Road adjacent to the Joe Heizer lot, which has been sold. The schoolhouse and its respective lot are owned by Summit Farms. The schoolhouse was originally located at the corner of Wagon Shop Road and Broadhead School Road. It was advertised for sale in the August 4, 1926, edition of The Daily News Leader along with a number of other one-room schools in the

County. The sale was scheduled for August 9th 1926 at 10:30 am. On August 10th The Daily News Leader published the buyers of the schools, with Buffalo School House being sold to J. W. Smiley, which would have likely been John Wilbur Smiley. (b. December 31, 1903 d. November 30, 1970). A Trustee's sale took place on the courthouse steps Monday, July 17, 1944, due to default on a deed of trust against the property which had been executed January 14, 1942. It was described, along with other property, as 1 acre, 1 rod, and 6 poles, more or less, formerly known as Buffalo Springs School House. This would have been about the time that Floyd Heizer bought the land associated with the schoolhouse. Floyd, and others helping him cut the building in half and moved the schoolhouse to its current location by means unknown to Floyd's grandson, David Heizer, but David speaks of his grandfather Floyd having a reputation for ingenuity. David believes the move would have been around 1945 or so. It was divided into rooms, the chimney rebuilt, which was originally and still is located in the center of the structure. A rear porch and side porch, both enclosed, were added some time later. The structure, once rebuilt, was used by the Heizers as a tenant house for the farm hand. It is now used for storage. The measurements of the original schoolhouse are as follows: 29 ft. long, 22.5 ft. wide, 11 ft. from the sill base to the soffit, 8 ft. from the soffit to the peak of the roof. The roof, based on measurements, has an approximate 8/12 pitch.

On March 16, 2023, Virginia State Archaeologist Robert Jolley met me, and we conducted a site survey at the original location of Buffalo Schoolhouse. It is now a part of the archives of Virginia's Department of Historical Resources. A record that will now escape being lost to time. A few questions still need to be answered about the schoolhouse, most importantly, when it opened.

The Hanger Reunion!

I announced in a previous newsletter that Marie Sproul was working on including "the descendants of Johann Frederick Hanger" as part of their 2023 Hanger family reunion. Those plans are coming together thanks to the hard work of Marie and her family. The preliminary itinerary is below.

The Hanger reunion will be held Saturday, August 12, 2023, at The People's Baptist Church, 3523 Spottswood Trail, Penn Laird, VA 22846,

The event will include lunch at noon followed by a presentation on Hanger Genealogy by Marie and I will have a presentation on Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery. We will also do a field trip to the cemetery on Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 pm both days. You won't want to miss this trip.

Because of the capacity of the church, the reunion will be limited this year to 150 attendees. Everyone is asked to bring a dish: It can be a main dish, side, or dessert. Marie is also asking that we RSVP so the planners have an idea of what to prepare for. Please include in your RSVP which day you will be taking the Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery tour.

This will most surely be a wonderful experience for all of us. I must confess that I have never attended a Hanger family reunion. A shameful confession I admit. Let's try to make the reunion a success for everyone. Plan to attend and don't forget to RSVP Marie. Her email is marie@thesprouls.net.

Cemetery Forensic Research

A brief update on the research conducted on April 8th. More to follow but this short email from Dr. Nash is certainly an indication that cadaver canine Seamus is providing all but unbelievable results. A dog that is able to detect the exact location of 200-year-old burial remains in an area full of burial remains is hard to believe, but any skepticism I had early on is long gone. Seamus is an expert witness in my book!

Dr. Nash's email:

We ran the GPR over two locations that Seamus hit on, and both are burials. We need to come back and focus solely on the hits. Thanks, C.

National Register Update

As stated in a previous newsletter, I have submitted the first draft for the National Register Nomination. I have corresponded with Aubrey Von Lindern since then and she has informed me that the June nomination schedule is full, and the cemetery submission will most likely be heard by the state review board in September during their quarterly meeting. I will most certainly need to do more work on the submission once Aubrey has a chance to edit it but for right now that is where we are.

Website Updates: Members Section

In The Library / Archives Section

Ship Passenger Lists 1732-1754 – 15 Total

Unpublished Documents - 7 Total

Published Documents – 10 Total –

Life in Dutch Hollow – 81 Total

Obituaries & Death Notices – 376 (Still several hundred to go)

Lucas-Fix Private Collection 109 Total

Department of Historical Resources Augusta County Archaeological Site Surveys

St. Paul Chapel, Newport, Virginia

Buffalo Springs Schoolhouse, Dutch Hollow, Virginia

DHH Cemetery Forensics, Etc.

April 8, 2023 – Photographs of Research Conducted by JMU & Others

Coming Soon:

Elijah Jacob Hanger Private Collection (Approximately 450 files to be uploaded as time permits)

In The Focused Research Section

18 Files (40+ more to be researched, formatted , and uploaded as time permits)

Corrections

I had an error in the May newsletter that I need to correct. I referred to Dr. Carole Nash as Dr. Connor when speaking about her and the students “arriving from JMU right on time.” It is Dr. Nash, not Dr. Connor, who is the department head of Archaeology at JMU. Dr. Connor is the proud handler of Seamus. Sorry for that mistake.

If you have not done so, please take time to check out the books that are available in the website store!

Oh yes, a word to the wise to finish out the newsletter. If you have thoroughly exhausted all of your genealogy leads and you still can't identify the black sheep of the family, it could be you!

Glenn Hanger

President, Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery