

THE HEADSTONE

Vol. II

November 2024

Issue XI

Hello and greetings to all!

And to think, Christmas is only fifty-five days away. Where does the time go? I hope everyone is happy and healthy and if not both, at least healthy. I have managed to squeeze a few extra minutes into my schedule as of late and have added a few more obituaries to the website. Just over 700 are now available to members and only several thousand to go. I found time over the last few weeks to add about sixty or so from the Lucas family, Serrett family, and a few others. This might be as good a spot as any to write a little about the Website's Library / Archives module.

I am in the process of adding files to a new module labeled, *Schoolhouses-Augusta Co. – 1800s*. The label is a little misleading because the files also include research from the early 1900s. Also, I have included Cotopaxi School which was in the "Bottom" on South River near Pkin in Rockbridge County. I am trying to upload tidbits of information and research as I run across it and eventually compile everything into some sort of indexed and intelligible database for folks to use. There is just so much to be learned from the schoolhouse research about our past and about our ancestors. So far there are fourteen files in the module that can be accessed, but that number is a little misleading too. For example, the file labeled "Broadhead," one of the fourteen, actually has twenty-four attachments within the file, mostly newspaper articles from the early 1900s. If you have any photos of old Augusta County Schools, teachers' names, locations, just anything that might complement the research, please let me know. A special thanks to Leonard Swortzel and member Richard Jones for really getting me interested in this particular rabbit hole.

Another module that is now in the Library / Archives section is labeled *Deed Histories-Dutch Hollow*. If you click on that tab, you will see that I am just getting started, mainly because transcribing ink and quill deeds from the seventeen and eighteen hundreds does not go that fast for me. I have over one-hundred deeds downloaded and saved but a lot of work to do before they can be of easy use to the reader.

What you don't see on the website yet are two additional ideas that I hope will be of help to you. First, I want to start a "marriages" module where records from newspaper clippings, family bibles, and public records can be compiled on marriages. Secondly, I want to upload an excel spreadsheet that will serve as an index for articles and topics in the newsletter. I have more than once tried to go back and quickly find some piece of information from *The Headstone* that I had written. It has not been always so "quickly" found so I thought an index might expedite future searches. We will see how well that goes and how useful you might find it to be.

For most all of us in the southeastern section of the country, we felt the impact of Hurricane Helene, which hit here in Dutch Hollow on Friday September 25th. My neighbor and website

member, Diana, texted me on Saturday and told me that there were two headstones down in the cemetery. I went over to check out what happened and found what you see in the photo below.



Not a big limb as big limbs go, but big enough. These are the grave markers of John Jacob Lotts Sr.(1797-1862) and his wife, Sarah Cox Lotts (1799-1878). Given the loss of life and property throughout the southeast due to this storm, I shall not utter one word of complaint about this minor issue. Not until late in the first week



of October did it dry out enough to make the repairs with the help of my genealogy mentor and good friend, Al, but they were made! Thanks Diana for letting me know.

Finally, on the 18th and 19th of October, I was able to give the cemetery what I figure was the last weed eating and mowing for the year. While there I was also able to talk with the owner of the land through which the cemetery access lane traverses and we made some unofficial plans to move a short section of fence to make for a little better lane access. The fence removal will only take an hour or so and once that is done, I plan to get some gravel down before it starts freezing and thawing. But before that, I will be calling the tree removal folks to address what I consider to be the most pressing issue facing the proper and long-term preservation of the cemetery. Below is a photo of the headstones after the repair bracing was removed.



When the job of cleaning up the graveyard got underway way back in 2021, there were approximately fifty-five graves recorded as being in Dutch Hollow. As work progressed and research was conducted, approximately twenty-two more burials were documented, mostly from 19th century obituaries, and many either had no headstone or one which could not be located. Then came Dr. Connor with her cadaver canines, followed by Dr. Nash from JMU with her archaeology students and ground penetrating radar. Dr. Connor has made seven trips to Dutch Hollow thus far and Dr. Nash has brought students twice! What a blessing they have all been. Long story short, we now have 109 marked graves in Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery. Some of these graves were discovered using ground penetrating radar, and in those cases, I have set stones at the precise spots where radar indicated there is a grave. These stones are all from the immediate area of the cemetery.

As an example, in 2022 I discovered what I suspected was a headstone very near the fence line on the northeast side of the graveyard. I retrieved the stone, cleaned it, and stored it near the cemetery in hopes I would one day know where it belonged. It had no detectable markings. I even wrote a little something about finding that stone in the e-book, *Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery, Silent Stories*, which members can access on the website. Below is a photo of that very stone when it was unearthed.



Fast forward to 2024. Dr. Nash and her students located a grave using radar not more than fifteen inches from where this particular stone was unearthed in 2022. That grave was documented as #105 in my records, and now the stone that was discovered in 2022 marks that grave. Is it the right stone for that grave? I have no idea, but as best practices go, I don't know that we will be able to do any better. The photo at right is how it looks now. Seventeen such stones have been set thus far with fourteen more to go if I recall correctly. The graves are also added to the Find A Grave website every time progress is made.



Keep in mind that only about fifty percent of the cemetery has been surveyed with the ground penetrating radar. I suspect there will be many more stones to set. If any member would be interested in helping with the stone setting as time and weather permits, please let me know and I will let you know when the next workday is scheduled. It is not hard work, with the most crucial part of it all being proper and precise documentation and record keeping. Below is a photo of my wife Laurin, her noble canine, Otis, and me during one such stone setting event. Laurin has been the champion of fixing computer issues for me and there is never a job that she will not help out with. I have attached several more photos, most of which were taken by Laurin's mom, Mary. They had walked from our house to the graveyard on this day. That's just how beautiful that particular October day was. I know you did not join the website to look at our family (and Otis), but it was a good day, and I felt compelled to share it with you all. And you know that anytime you visit, I will do the same for you if you don't object to your picture being in the newsletter.





Here Otis has located the headstone for grave number 99 that was found using GPR after which I set this stone in place. If I could only train him to find the buried headstones!

On October 23rd my pal James and I took a field trip to the Library of Virginia. It was a trip that was organized by the Augusta County Genealogical Society. I nor James had ever been, and I was not sure what to expect much beyond it being a Library. It was great! Our group, which consisted of ten ACGS members and guests, were given a guided tour of the facility and everything that the library has to offer was explained. The staff members were as accommodating as they could be and I don't think there were more than twenty people using the library, including the ten in our group, at any point in time during the whole day. Everyone in our group had research they wanted to get done and for James and me, we had a few to-do things on our list, but we really just took things as they came. I did find the 1972 records of Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery and was able to scan those to a thumb drive for future reference. These were notes made first in December 1972 by Mrs. A. V. Griffith and Mrs. John A. Taylor, Sr. and later added to by Mr. and Mrs. Carl Larsen of Baytown, Texas. One thing noted about their research; the marked headstones that I have recovered that were buried are not noted on their 1972 research documentation either. This tells me that those stones were buried by at least 1972, over fifty years ago. Who knows what lies beneath the surface still, hiding a wealth of genealogical information. The resources at the library are unbelievable and now that I know a little of what the Library of Virginia has to offer, I have already started my to-do list for the next trip. Maybe on a cold day this winter. I have used the library records that are available online quite often but to be there at the library itself and to sit down with those old documents in hand was a great experience for me. Give some thought to checking it out for yourself. If you don't think you can make the trip anytime soon but need copies of something there, let me know and if I do get to go maybe I can find what you need while I am there.

In closing out this month's newsletter, I just want to say that I hope that you take time to reflect on all the things you have to be thankful for, especially as Thanksgiving approaches. Without doubt, some of you have faced hardships this year. Maybe it was the loss of a loved one, a health issue, or maybe just feeling lonely. But I still hope you can find a few things to be thankful for. If you have done much research on your ancestors or for that matter just research on the history of our country, it does not take long to find a blessing or two giving the hardships and challenges they faced. To maybe spur your thoughts in the thankful direction, I have provided the follow article written by Zelda Caldwell on November 24, 2021, followed by portions of presidential Thanksgiving Day proclamations delivered by ten of our presidents.¹

George Washington was the first to call for a national day of Thanksgiving. In 1789, President George Washington proclaimed Thursday, November 26, a day for Americans to give their "sincere and humble thanks" to "that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be."

A Day of Thanksgiving became a national tradition in 1863, when Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation declaring that the last Thursday in November would be devoted to the praise and acknowledgement of God's blessings upon the country. Since then, every president has issued a Thanksgiving Proclamation, and on June 28, 1870, President Ulysses S. Grant signed into law the Holidays Act that made Thanksgiving an annual federal holiday.

The words of the nation's leaders reveal a country beset at times by war and adversity, just as we face our own particular challenges today. The call to give thanks for our blessings in good times and in bad is a welcome and much needed reminder, now as it was then.

¹ <https://aleteaia.org/slideshow/slideshow-8-inspiring-thanksgiving-proclamations-from-u-s-presidents>

George Washington, October 3, 1789

"That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks - for his kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a Nation - for the single and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his Providence which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war - for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed..."

Abraham Lincoln, October 3, 1863

"I recommend to them that, while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation, and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union."

Andrew Johnson, October 28, 1865

"...And I do further recommend that on that occasion the whole people make confession of our national sins against His infinite goodness, and with one heart and one mind implore the divine guidance in the ways of national virtue and holiness."

Ulysses S. Grant, October 23, 1871

"I therefore recommend that on Thursday, the 30th day of November next, the people meet in their respective places of worship, and there make the usual acknowledgements to Almighty God for the blessings he has conferred upon them; for their merciful exemption from the evil, and invoke His protection and kindness for their less fortunate brethren whom, in His wisdom he has deemed it best to chastise."

Grover Cleveland, November 1, 1894

"On that day let our ordinary work and business be suspended and let us meet in our accustomed places of worship and give thanks to the Almighty God for our preservation as a nation, for our immunity from disease and pestilence, for the harvests that have rewarded our husbandry, for a renewal of national prosperity, and for every advance in virtue and intelligence that has marked our growth as a people."

Calvin Coolidge, October 26, 1927

"Under the guidance and watchful care of a Divine and beneficent Providence this country has been carried safely through another year. Almighty God has continued to bestow upon us the light of His countenance, and we have prospered."

Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 31, 1939

"Let us, on the day set aside for this purpose, give thanks to the Ruler of the Universe for the strength which He has vouchsafed us to carry on our daily labors and for the hope that lives within us of the coming of a day when peace and the productive activities of peace shall reign on every continent."

Harry S. Truman, November 12, 1945

"In this year of our victory, absolute and final, over German fascism and Japanese militarism; in this time of peace so long-awaited, which we are determined with all the United Nations to make permanent; on this day of our abundance, strength, and achievement; let us give thanks to Almighty Providence for these exceeding blessings."

John F. Kennedy, November 5, 1963

"Today we give our thanks, most of all, for the ideals of honor and faith we inherit from our forefathers-for the decency of purpose, steadfastness of resolve and strength of will, for the courage and the humility, which they possessed and which we must seek every day to emulate as we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words but to live by them."

Ronald Reagan, October 13, 1986

"Rooted deeply in our Judeo-Christian heritage, the practice of offering Thanksgiving underscores our unshakeable belief in God as the foundation of our Nation and our firm reliance upon Him from Whom all blessings flow. Both as individuals and as a people, we join with the Psalmist in song and praise: Give thanks unto the Lord for He is good."

And if you are wondering if politics played into how these speeches were worded, I would argue they did not. Notwithstanding the role that the National Union Party played in Lincoln's and Johnson's nomination and election in 1864, if my research is not otherwise flawed, of the ten presidents quoted, their affiliations were as follows:

- 1 Unaffiliated (George Washington)
- 5 Democrat
- 4 Republican

Did you find a favorite among the proclamations listed?

Don't forget, we turn our clocks back this Sunday Morning, November 3rd!

And then the next thing you know, it will be time to switch back in the spring. But look on the bright side, with inflation being what it is, that hour may be the only thing we save all year!

Website Updates: Members Section

In The Library / Archives Section

Ship Passenger Lists 1732-1754 – 15 Total

Unpublished Documents - 9 Total

Published Documents – 11 Total

Life in Dutch Hollow – 153 Total

Obituaries & Death Notices – 736 (Still several hundred, thousand to go)

Lucas-Fix Private Collection 109 Total

Department of Historical Resources Augusta County Archaeological Site Surveys – 16

Deed Histories – Dutch Hollow - 5

DHH Cemetery Forensics, Etc. – Preliminary Findings of Ground Penetrating Radar for lower 35 feet of Cemetery and GPS of entire cemetery – 2

Frederich Hanger Descendants Over 200 pages of his descendants' names with city, county, and state of residence when known.

Cook-Teaford Cemetery - 2 Files

Schoolhouses-Augusta Co. – 1800s - 14

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)

The **Miscellaneous Research Files** module now contains 39 files. There are over 350 files contained within those 37 files. Please use them. All of that work is for your benefit and was done with you in mind. Take advantage of it! By the same token, let me know what you would like to see changed or added and I will do my best to accommodate.

Several things for you to ponder on. Let's see if you agree:

1. Only a genealogist views a step backwards as progress.
2. A packrat is hard to live with, but makes a mighty fine ancestor.
3. "Done! Everything in the family tree has been found and completely organized" – said no genealogist, EVER!

Until next month, Blessings & Happy Trails.

Glenn Hanger

President, Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery