

THE HEADSTONE

Vol. I

May 2023

Issue V

I continue to peck out these newsletters in hopes that they bring at least a morsel of enjoyable reading to each of you. I guess when I really get down to it, my hope is that it comes out a little bit like a letter from home. (In more ways than one!) I used to enjoy my mother reading letters that we would get from friends and family since we had no phone when I was a boy. All the news that was important to the writer and most times equally important to the reader. The real treat would be a picture, or the grand prize of all, a postcard from somewhere that made you try to find it in the National Geographic. Where did those days go? I don't pretend to believe that these newsletters do all that for you the reader, but they do for me.

Most of what I know about Dutch Hollow has come from research. Even though I have lived in Dutch Hollow nearly all my life, I did not have the foresight nor the wisdom to ask questions when I should have. And it is always those nagging little things, really little things. Like all the years I hunted as a boy in Fulton's Hollow. Do you think I ever asked my daddy how it got its name? Nope. But I know now. So, my thinking is, if I document what little I have discovered during my research, no one will have to feel quite as guilty about not asking those same questions. I know, it's not the same, but maybe it will do. So, let's get to the news, shall we.

April 8, 2023, Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery

Dr. Nash arrived right on time with six Archaeology students on a cold, cloudy and windy morning but that did not keep her and her team from going to work. The students worked great together and despite the cold they were cheerful and very professional. A very impressive group indeed. They formed two teams; one team was assigned to plotting GPS coordinates of literally everything in the graveyard and the other team deployed the ground penetrating radar unit. Dr. Connor brought her noble canine, Seamus, and Jan Jones brought hers as well, a beautiful dog named Quest. They too worked hard.

Synopsis of Work Completed

GPS Coordinates of:

Cemetery Perimeter

Flower Clusters

Yuccas

Trees

Fence Posts

Cadaver Canine Hits

GPR of:

35 feet from the lower fence up the hill to the tree at the footstones of George & Elizabeth Lotts extending the width of the cemetery. The stopping point line was marked at each end with triple flagging as there is much more ground to cover at a later date.

Datum Points for Coordinates. These points were marked with stakes and fletching and remain in place for future use.

Miscellaneous:

Dr. Nash & Dr. Connor were provided with a copy of my Master Plot Sheet.

Plans are to return once the initial data is analyzed and found correct.

Dr. Connor and Jan Jones, using their canines, identified 12 more potential graves. 4 in the lower section and 8 in the top section. Total Potential graves now at 41.

Several potential buried headstones were located by Dr. Nash using a ground probe rod.

The results are currently pending completion of computer lab analysis at JMU.

Below are a few photos taken while the work was underway. As you look through these pictures, just pause for a moment and consider how fortunate we are to have this group that is using state of the art equipment to perform forensic examinations that may answer questions that have been and otherwise would remain forever unanswered. What a Blessing.

As a huge side note, Dr. Nash has offered to accompany me to Richmond when the National Register & Virginia Landmarks Nomination hearing is held and speak from the perspective of an archaeologist in support of the cemetery being accepted. What an honor it is for her to being willing to do that for us. All of the experts have warned me that cemeteries are extremely difficult to get on that register and only a few have ever made it. Most graveyards are just that and nothing more. I am arguing that this one is different. I submitted the rough draft to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for review on April 7, 2023, all 132 pages. I am sure more work needs to be done so we will see. I will post updates to the website. Now for the visuals:



Above: A Quick Country Sausage Biscuit to Keep the Cold Day at Bay. What a Great Group!



Above: GPS Team Plotting Coordinates of Cemetery Attributes



Above: Initial Setup of the Ground Penetrating Radar Unit (GPR)



Above: Establishing and Setting the GPR Travel Lines



Above: The GPR Team with the GPR Deployed, imaging everything beneath the surface to a preset depth (It has a maximum depth range of 70 feet, but we didn't need that setting thank goodness!)



Above: Dr. Nash Using the Manual Ground Penetrating Rod to Locate Buried Headstones



Above: Jan Jones (Left) and Dr. Connor using Seamus to Locate Potential Unmarked Graves

(I had suspected that the large limestone rock lying flat to the right of Jan was a headstone ever since I discovered it. As you can see by the flag set beside it, Seamus is in agreement!)

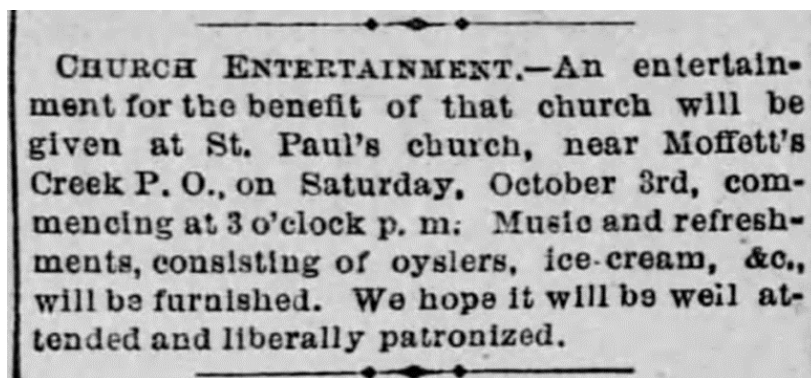
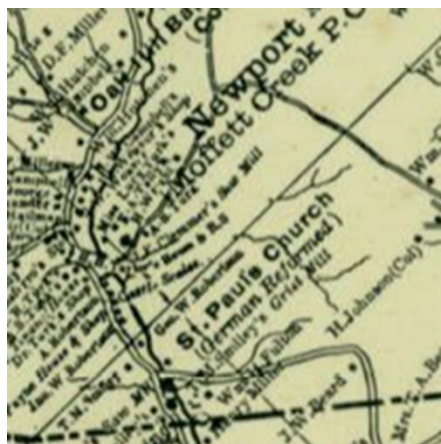
Archaeological Site Survey Focus: St. Paul German Reformed Church, Newport, Virginia

The site remains of St. Paul can be seen from just east of the intersection of Newport Road and Rt. 252 about 100 yards east of Moffatts Creek¹ near the village of Newport. The land is owned by Virginia Gano. The original structure measured approximately 30' 6" X 40' 3."



On March 16, 2023 , I had the privilege of accompanying Bob Jolley, Archaeologist for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) to this and a number of other sites. The way it works is this: I identify historic sites, secure permission from the landowner, Bob travels to Augusta County, and we go out to the sites and document what we can. I take photographs and help with measurements, and he produces a

Site Survey Record for these sites which are then placed in the DHR archives for future reference. The thinking is that these sites could easily disappear with little or no historical record documented. This process places no encumbrances whatsoever on the property or landowner.



St. Paul has some important facts still well concealed. The start date of the church is not known by this researcher.

After reading an 1891 newspaper article² about a supper being given as a fundraiser for the church, one might think this was near the start date, but the church was in existence in 1884 when Jedidiah Hotchkiss mapped this portion of Augusta County.³

The benefit supper is the first published article I have been able to locate but as stated, the church was there and in service long before that.

¹ <https://earth.google.com/web/@37.99190303,-79.30201616,522.10429354a,213.27681585d,35y,-0h,0t,0r>

² Newspapers.com. Staunton Spectator, Staunton, Virginia. 23 September 1891. Page 3.

³ Hotchkiss, Jed. (1885) Illustrated Historical Atlas of Augusta County Virginia 1885.

On December 11, 1927, Rev. Horace Lequear preached the 3:30 worship service at St. Paul and was touted as the New Pastor.⁴ Rev. Lequear was officially called as the minister for St. John's and St Paul February 12, 1928.⁵ He preached at both churches and lived in the St. John's parsonage.

St. Paul's Reformed Church
3:30 p. m. Regular preaching
service in charge of the new pas-
tor, the Rev. Horace R. Lequear.
The public invited to attend.

Middlebrook Charge Getting New Minister

The Rev. Horace R. Lequear, for 21 years a missionary to China but since the troubles there located in Pennsylvania, will begin his pastorate on the Middlebrook charge, Reformed Church, which embraces St. John's church near Middlebrook and St. Paul's at Newport, on Feb. 12.

Mr. Lequear's decision to remain in this country and accept a charge was prompted largely by the unsafe conditions in China, which made it unwise for him to return there with his family at this time.

He has been making his home at New Britain, Pa., since the death of his parents, who resided there. He expects to move from his New Britain home to St. John's parsonage arriving this evening.

On Saturday afternoon, Feb. 11, the St. John's congregation plans to "pound" its new pastor and all members of this congregation are requested to show their appreciation to the pastor and his family by calling and presenting to them such gifts as they may desire to give, whether large or small. Those who are unable to visit the parsonage on Saturday are asked to do so on a like mission as soon thereafter as convenient.

The St. Paul's congregation expects to "pound" the new minister later.

The last documentation I can currently locate on St Paul German Reformed Church is a newspaper article dated January 17, 1931. It announces the evening worship service at 3:00 pm with a "brief meeting of the congregation after the service."⁶ Was this the dismissal of the minister, him announcing his departure, or the closing of the doors. What is known is that Rev. Lequear was the full-time preacher for St. Michael Reformed Church located just south of Bridgewater at least by June 1933. He was still preaching there at least until November 1940. Known dates for St. Paul at this point: 1891-1931.

Middlebrook Reformed
St. John: 10 a. m., Sunday
school. Hand in nomination bal-
lots. 11:10 a. m., worship and
sermon; 7:30 p. m., Union league
at Holy Trinity.
St. Paul: 3 p. m., worship and
sermon. Brief meeting of con-
gregation after the service. A
cordial welcome to all at the reg-
ular services. Horace R. Le-
quear, pastor.

St. Paul was an active church, with a youth group, Sunday School, and bi-weekly worship service for at least 40 years. I have not given up on finding the full dates of existence for St. Paul. Given that Rev. Lequear was also the minister at St John's, I contacted the historian for St. John's that I have worked with in the past and records for Rev.

Lequear's tenure do exist. It is my hope that all of the records for St. Paul were absorbed into the archives at St. John's and I will be able to get and offer a full picture of the St. Paul German

⁴ Newspapers.com. The Daily News Leader, Staunton, Virginia. 10 December 1927. Page 4.

⁵ Newspapers.com. The Daily News Leader, Staunton, Virginia. 9 February 1928. Page 1.

⁶ Newspapers.com. The Daily News Leader, Staunton, Virginia. 17 January 1931. Page 3.

Reformed Church. So, hope for updates on this project in upcoming newsletters. I have included a couple of pictures of the site and will provide the DHR Site Survey in a subsequent newsletter when it is completed.



Above: Steps leading up to the entry door of the church.



Above: The foundation was constructed of exceptionally large hand cut stones that seem to have fit together so perfectly that they appear to have been dry stacked with no mortar needed.

If you enjoy reading, I ask that you take a look at the books that are in the website store. There are several church history books available for purchase there and each is chocked full of information about the churches, the people that made up those churches, and the surrounding area. They are very reasonably priced and none of the books for sale are still in print. All of the proceeds go towards the upkeep of the cemetery. The *Blood of Our Blood-Families In History* Book will never be reprinted according to the author's daughter. She has very few copies left. I was able to get five and only have one left for sale. I am not sure if I can get more but I will try if folks express an interest.

Website Updates: Members Section

In The Library / Archives Section

Ship Passenger Lists 1732-1754 – 15 Total

Unpublished Documents: - 7 Total

Published Documents – 9 Total –

Life in Dutch Hollow – 72 Total

Obituaries & Death Notices – 363 (Still several hundred to go)

Lucas-Fix Private Collection 109 Total

Coming Soon:

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

NEW CATEGORIES

Department of Historical Resources Augusta County Archaeological Site Surveys

St. Paul Chapel, Newport, Virginia

DHH Cemetery Forensics, Etc.

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

In The Focused Research Section

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

I have tried to save what I consider the best for last. I say that because I feel the following is what genealogy is all about. Maybe you will too after reading it.

Marie Byrd Sproul is a Hanger descendant and she, her husband Eric, and his parents George and Sharon Hanger Sproul visited the cemetery in Augusta of 2022. The whole family are great folks, and they have great respect for their ancestors. Marie obtained her genealogy certification

in October of 2021 after completing the Boston University Genealogical Research Certificate Program. She now offers professional research to those wishing to have a family story researched and written. Click on the link to access her services. [Family Origin Stories](#)

I have also included Marie's most recent blog below just so you can get to "know her" a little better. Marie and her family are planning a "Descendants of Frederick Hanger" reunion this summer here in the Shenandoah Valley. This event should prove to be very exciting, as Marie has several programs lined up for those attending, including a field trip to Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery! More will be announced as plans are finalized. SO, let's all plan to attend.

Visiting With My Ancestors

4/12/2023

My husband and I are both from the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, he from Augusta County and I from the neighboring county of Rockingham. Our roots are deep there with our Ancestors arriving in the Valley in the 1700s. Like a lot of people from the Valley, he and I actually share a common ancestor as well (don't worry, it's pretty far back!). Both of our mothers' maiden name is Hanger. John Jacob Hanger(1790-1870) and Catharine Wehrle(1791-1826) are my 4x great-grandparents and my husband's 3x great-grandparents, which makes us 4th cousins once removed (see, it's totally fine!).

We no longer live in the Shenandoah Valley but visit as often as we are able. Last summer we returned for the Hanger Family Reunion, which had not been held since Covid. The numbers have dwindled over the years with only 13 in attendance last year. I decided that while we were in town, I would try to "visit" as many of my Hanger ancestors as I could find! With some digging, planning and preparation, our trip was a success and left us both with an even stronger sense of connection to our ancestors and the Valley from which we came. It was a very special trip!

The way I "visited" with my ancestors on this trip was to visit gravesites, places they had once lived, and also some archives for a couple of very old documents! I also made Facebook posts in my family's page so my siblings and nieces and nephews could learn a little about their ancestors as well.

First my sister and I took my mother to the Hanger Family Reunion. Here we visited with our living relatives listening to the stories of their parents and looking through their old photographs. This is so important! Often, we think of family history as being something from long ago and forget that our parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles are a great touchstone to that past and have lots of information that they love sharing and passing down. So, make sure to get those stories while you still can!

After the reunion, we visited my mother's parents(my grandparents), Howard Hamilton Hanger(1918-1986) and Hazel Frances Sandy(1920-1984).

Howard served in WWII and then worked on farms in Rockingham County the rest of his life. Hazel played the guitar and wrote country songs. Together they raised 6 children, Kenny, Opal, Laura(my mother), Larry, Phyllis and Dale. Dale died in a drowning accident at the age of 14. Opal and Larry are also no longer with us.

Next stop was the Dayton Cemetery where my great-grandparents are buried, Frank Bismark Hanger (1890-1950) and Laura Virginia Fadely (1891-1975). My mother was named after Laura Virginia. She knew her well and remembers her giving them each a coloring book and crayons for Christmas. She was too young to remember Frank who died when she was only 6 years old.

Frank was the first of the Hangers in my family to move into Rockingham County, Virginia. The Hangers originally settled in Augusta County, Virginia in the mid-1700s.

We also managed to locate the area where Frank's farm would have been when he was living there in the 1920s. It is beautiful countryside! My mother tells us this area used to be called Lick Skillet because during the Civil War there was an encampment of soldiers there who would "lick the skillet clean" because they didn't have enough food to go around.

My great-great grandparents are buried in Weyers Cave, Augusta County, Virginia. Ewell Walker Hanger (1866-1937) and Mary Ann Mohler (1864-1945). They lived on a farm in that area. At the age of 71, Ewell was baling hay and fell off the wagon and died of his wounds a few days later. He was baling hay at 71! Ewell and Mary had 5 children.

Interestingly, I also lived on a farm in Weyers Cave for a brief period of time in my childhood. I never knew my great-great grandparents were just down the road from me!

A little further up the Valley in Middlebrook, Virginia, there is a Hanger family cemetery called Dutch Hollow Cemetery. (Look for a blog post soon all about Dutch Hollow Cemetery and the man who pretty much single-handedly brought it back to life!)

My 3- and 4x great-grandparents are buried there. David Ott Hanger (1820-abt 1868) and Elizabeth Cale (1826-1906) are my 3x great-grandparents. Together they raised 9 children. He died not long after their last son, Ewell (my great-great grandfather), was born, leaving Elizabeth to raise most of the children on her own.

David's headstone has not been found in the cemetery, but Elizabeth's has and it is likely that he would have been buried there.

John Jacob Hanger(1790-1870) and Catharine Wehrle(1791-1826), David's parents, are also buried at Dutch Hollow. John owned the land right next to the cemetery and his house was still standing until around 1970! They raised 9 children together. (John is mine and my husband's common ancestor.)

John's parents (my 5x great-grandparents), John Jacob Hanger Sr(1764-1833) and Catharine Dull(1770-1830) are likely buried in Dutch Hollow Cemetery as well. Their graves have yet to be found. They lived in Middlebrook and had 10 children.

My 6x great-grandfather Johann Frederick Hengerer(1726-1799) married Eva Margaretha Mayer(1736-1818). He was the first of my Hanger ancestors to settle in Augusta County, Virginia. In 1740, at the age of 14, his parents, my 7x great-grandparents, Melchior Hengerer

and Maria Majer, immigrated from Württemberg, in what is today Germany, and arrived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on the Robert and Alice.

I discovered that the University of Virginia's small collections library has in its holdings a piece of paper on which Frederick recorded all the names and baptismal dates for his 13 children. My husband and I visited the library and were able to "visit" with our ancestors!

It was amazing to touch (very carefully) a piece of paper from 1755 that had been touched by my 6x great-grandparents. It was a moment! Not only did that document provide us with important genealogical information, but it was also a touchstone to the past. In that moment, I felt very connected to them.

With a lot of research and planning, I managed to "visit" with all of my Hanger ancestors going all the way back to the first Hanger who entered the Valley in the 1760s. It was a trip I will never forget and I am so happy I was able to share it with my husband and my mother! I have always loved Rockingham and Augusta counties, but I now feel a very deep-rooted sense of belonging by connecting with my Ancestors on that trip.

Thanks Marie, what a great story!

So, I ask you, is this genealogy at its finest or what? Marie also included some great photos that accompany her posting. Please take a look at those. They can be viewed by visiting her blog at:

[Marie's Blog Post 4-12-23](#)

I suppose the thing to do is sign off for now. I hope you have picked up a morsel or two from what I have tried to share, mostly as a result of the hard work of others. Please consider attending the Hanger family reunion if it is within your means to do so. I will send out an email just as soon as a date is set.

And remember, always be thorough in your research. Leave no stone unturned....unless it is a headstone!

Glenn Hanger

President, Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery