

THE HEADSTONE

Vol. III

January 2025

Issue I

Hello and greetings to all!

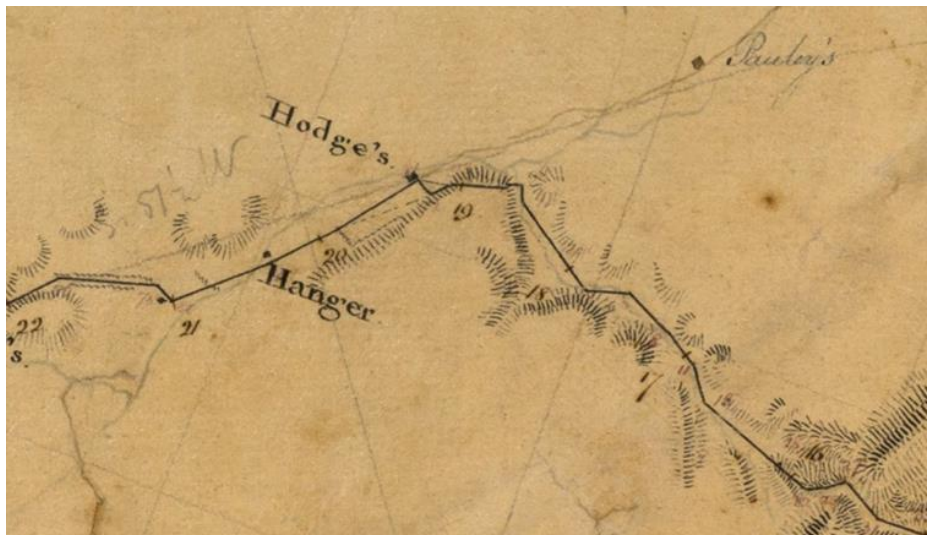
Being on the cusp of 2025, I wish each of you a happy New Year. It truly is my hope that the new year is filled with joy and good health for everyone. I also hope you had a wonderful Christmas, filled with the joy of the season.

As for the weather here, Cold and then some. December was a below average temperature month, and the wind seemed to blow about every day. I can always tell just how warm it has not been when I look at my wood pile. For members in the mid-west and Great Lakes region, I know, I don't know how good I have it.

The Value of Research, or Just Snooping Around

Through the last of November and most of December when time permitted, I was committed to gathering all of the information on The Valley Railroad section of the Baltimore and Ohio that ran from Harrisonburg to Lexington, Virginia. It's the same railroad that utilized the stone bridge featured in last month's newsletter. I was searching the records of The National Archives for railroad valuation maps and stumbled upon the map below. It is dated 1825 and was drawn by Claudius Crozet, who was the well-known civil engineer who oversaw the construction of the Blue Ridge Tunnel in the 1850s. It is the oldest Augusta County map found by me to date which has the names of residents listed on the map. This particular map is titled *The Road From Staunton to Callahan* and has absolutely nothing to do with railroads. The Callahan on the map is the one in Allegheny County near Clifton Forge. Crozet even lists the miles from start to finish. What caught my eye about this particular map was the name Hanger, shown as a resident on the Deerfield Road. It was the first I knew of a Hanger living out there in an area that was still very much a wilderness in 1825.

I have not determined which Hanger it was, but if identified, a big gap in the migration timeline from Augusta County to points west could get filled in. A large number of Hanger's went west in the early 1800s, a disproportionate number in my opinion, and settled in the Upper Mississippi and Ohio Valleys, with a few continuing on to the Great Plains with still some going on to points west of the great divide. Almost all of them show up out there on records as farmers, merchants, and business owners. And then again, maybe this particular Hanger just stayed right here in Virginia.





Laws governing Private Cemeteries in Virginia

One of our members, David McKaskey, who I was privileged to work with when he served as Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney for Augusta County way back in the day, sent me an article several months ago that I thought would be of interest to others. So many of us use graveyard records and as an extension of that research, actually visit the burials places of those we research. Many of these are on private property. So just what are the laws of Virginia governing the rights of those that wish to visit and of those that own the property? And are there legal assurances that even if we don't visit, our loved ones' graves will be preserved? I have attached below the full article that Dave sent me. It was authored by Ernest W. Porta, Jr. and I have included the full article which includes his bio.¹ Thank you, Dave and thanks to Mr. Porta for publishing this important information.

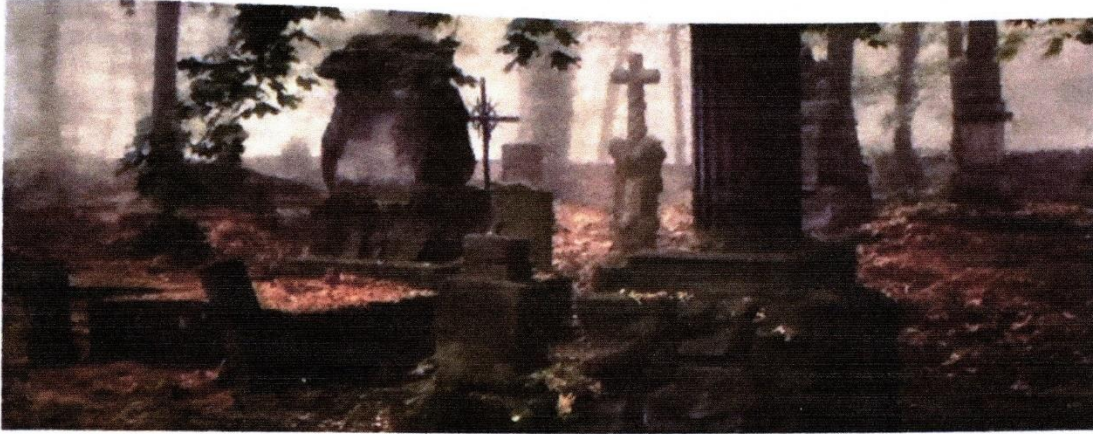
If you have time, take a look at the endnotes associated with the research Mr. Porta did for the article, particularly number 7. If anyone knows of a private cemetery in Virginia and would like to have the location recorded with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) let me know and I will get the information from you and see that it gets recorded if it has not been. It can be as small as one grave and still be recorded.

The scans for the attached article are a little wavy and I apologize for that, but I think they are legible.

¹ Porta, Jr. E. W. (December 2023) Private Cemeteries in Virginia: The Law of Ownership, Maintenance, and Access. *Virginia Lawyer*, Volume 72. Pages 29-32.

Private Cemeteries in Virginia: The Law of Ownership, Maintenance, and Access

by Earnest W. Porta Jr.



Over the past decade, private cemeteries in Virginia have been the subject of intense, emotionally-charged debate. In 2013 workers discovered graves on the site of a proposed new high school sports complex in Prince William County. After work on relocating the bodies had begun, researchers identified likely descendants of those interred. Though apparently previously unaware of the cemetery's existence, some of them reacted with alarm upon learning that the bodies were being moved.¹

Not long after, in Mecklenburg County, surveyors of a property slated for development discovered cemetery gravestones in a wooded area. To the consternation of descendants, neither the county nor the property owner's representatives allegedly made any attempt to locate and consult with them on relocating the cemetery. Instead, authorities opted to simply meet the legal requirement of posting notices in the newspaper.² More recently, in 2021, again in Prince William County, the temporary blocking of an access route to a cemetery, and land clearance allegedly affecting another cemetery, led to bitter recriminations, new county policies, and legal wrangling.³

It is no surprise that issues surrounding cemeteries may be fraught with emotion. Complicating the matter is that the sentiments for identifying and marking private cemeteries can vary widely both among and within the parties typically involved. Landowners, for example, may believe that a

private cemetery diminishes the value of their property and thus choose not to investigate rumors or local lore about potential unmarked burial sites. Correspondingly, those who have an attachment to an isolated family or community cemetery may discourage more widespread knowledge of its existence for fear of vandalism, unwanted gatherings, or simply because they consider it a place of private refuge. Whatever the rationale, there is not universal agreement among cemetery owners, descendants of the interred, and visitors that the existence of private cemeteries should be widely known. **This naturally increases the likelihood that property owners will unintentionally find themselves owners of burial sites and that visitors to a private cemetery may find the site under threat or their traditional means of access and use curtailed or modified.**

A private cemetery refers to family or small community burial sites on private property; it intentionally excludes cemeteries controlled by or affiliated with a church organization, those owned or operated by a municipality or other governmental entity, and cemeteries with burial plots available for sale to the general public—all of which are subject to a different legal framework.

Ownership

Virginia statute and local government ordinances typically define a cemetery as any land or structure used or intended to be used for the interment of human remains.⁴ There is

no requirement for boundaries or markers. Nor is any deed or writing necessary. In the end, all that is ultimately required is an actual burial. While local governments in the Commonwealth have a variety of zoning and other regulations that apply to cemeteries, Virginia law specifically exempts “interment of members of a family on private property” from the requirement that cemeteries be authorized by zoning ordinance.⁵ Consequently, while the overwhelming majority of burials today indeed take place at public or church cemeteries, it is still possible for private property to serve as the final resting place of deceased family members, provided one complies with relevant health department and local regulations.

Virginia law specifically exempts “interment of members of a family on private property” from the requirement that cemeteries be authorized by zoning ordinance.

More importantly, even if the Commonwealth outlawed all private burials tomorrow,⁶ Virginians would still confront innumerable private burial grounds already in place, marked and unmarked, known and unknown. Just how many there are no one knows. There is no comprehensive statewide map of private cemeteries in Virginia.⁷ Additionally, local government publication of map layers identifying known cemeteries varies.⁸ Then, of course, there are cemeteries of which local government officials are unaware.

Further complicating the matter is that in contrast to a number of other states, Virginia law does not require the disclosure of burial sites in all land conveyances. For public sales of publicly-owned property, governing bodies must provide notice that a known cemetery exists on the site,⁹ and local governments often mandate a survey, demarcation, and other measures related to cemeteries in the context of site or subdivision plans and rezoning applications.¹⁰ But there is no disclosure obligation in transactions among private parties. Rather, in such cases, Virginia largely remains a “buyer beware” state. Of course, sellers are subject to the normal obligations of truthfulness when making representations, and realtors would hopefully disclose the existence of a graveyard. But there is no requirement that a seller or their agent investigate or unilaterally disclose the presence of burials prior to sale.

Given all this, as some of the examples in the introduction suggest, it is not unheard of or perhaps even unusual for a property owner—particularly those who purchase large acreage in rural areas—to inadvertently find themselves owners of a private cemetery, with attendant obligations. In situations where the property owner is aware of the presence of a cemetery, they may still be confused about ownership issues and obligations, particularly if the local government mapper excludes ownership information, or the HOA in which they reside does not retain a professional management company.

Despite the possibility for confusion, in most instances ownership of private cemeteries is reasonably straightforward. The owner of the surrounding land on which the cemetery is situated is quite often the owner of the cemetery as well. In HOAs, the cemetery may be on the lot of an individual property owner, or more likely, in an area designated as part of the association’s common area. It is not unusual in older subdivisions with ambiguous, seldom-consulted covenants and declarations for residents to assume a local cemetery is the responsibility of the descendants of the interred. Some will find a reservation in deeds that seems to support that view.

Yet, in all likelihood, the cemetery is owned by the surrounding property owner or the HOA. Deeds that in the past conveyed property that now includes a cemetery often contain language that “reserves” a portion of the property for a cemetery. Virginia courts have repeatedly held that this reservation does not, however, withhold a fee interest in the land of the cemetery. Rather, the cemetery area is deemed conveyed to the grantee of the overall parcel, and the reservation is interpreted as conveying to particular parties an easement in gross of a specific right to use the cemetery.¹¹ Thus, in the majority of cases, it is likely that the owner of the land on which a cemetery sits is in fact the owner of the cemetery as well.

It is worth noting that in certain circumstances unwilling owners of private cemeteries may be able to relocate them. If the graveyard was previously unidentified or is an abandoned family graveyard, and there has been no reservation of rights or the beneficiaries of such rights waive them, and a body has not been interred in the graveyard for 25 years, Virginia Code § 57-38.1 permits the landowner to seek court approval for

removal and relocation. There are a variety of notice and publication requirements in such instances, and the court will consider, among other issues, the historical significance of the graveyard. But if the court is satisfied and the petitioner is willing to bear the expense, the courts are empowered to authorize removal and relocation of the human remains.¹²

Cemetery Maintenance

Despite the trepidation that might come with the realization that one inadvertently owns a private cemetery, the obligations of such ownership in Virginia are modest. Neither state statute nor common law require an owner to maintain a cemetery in any particular condition. One is free, for example, to allow it to become overgrown and unkept and for the grave markers to fall over or disintegrate. Ownership does not convey a right to remove remains or destroy, deface, or otherwise do injury to the site, and any willful or malicious action to such effect is a felony.¹³ But there is no affirmative duty on the part of the owner to maintain a cemetery; they are free to essentially abandon it.

In cases where an owner chooses this course, adjacent property owners may have remedies. State statute permits adjacent property owners or the local governing body where the private graveyard is located to petition the circuit court to require that the graveyard be put in a "suitable condition" if through neglect and disuse it becomes "unsightly and thereby lessens the desirability and value of adjacent land."¹⁴ While this would seem to necessitate action on the part of the cemetery owner, even this potential obligation is limited, for if no grave or entombment right has ever been sold, statute indicates that the court will not force the owners to maintain the area. Instead, the court may allow the petitioning party to perform the maintenance of the cemetery at their own expense, provided they pay the costs of the case and post bond if requested by the court to address potential claims for injury or damage. In other words, though a property owner may find themselves the surprise owners of a cemetery that perhaps affects the resale value of their land, the Virginia legislature has formally protected them in certain circumstances from also assuming an unanticipated maintenance obligation.

Access

Generally speaking, the primary obligation of cemetery owners is to allow access to appropriate parties. Virginia Code § 57-27.1 specifically requires that cemetery owners allow access to the cemetery for the purpose of visitation by family members/descendants of people buried there, plot owners, and for genealogical research. This access right is not unlimited, however. Landowners can require reasonable notice and place restrictions on frequency, hours, and duration of access. While they can fence or wall off the cemetery, they must then incorporate a gate that permits authorized access. In addition, owners can designate the access route if no traditional access route is easily visible. By granting access the owner is immune from liability for such access absent gross negligence or willful misconduct.¹⁵

Ownership does not convey a right to remove remains or destroy, deface, or otherwise do injury to the site, and any willful or malicious action to such effect is a felony, but there is no affirmative duty on the part of the owner to maintain a cemetery; they are free to essentially abandon it.

Corresponding obligations also exist for those accessing the cemetery. Under § 57-27.1, for example, they are liable for any damage they cause. Additionally, in *Turner v. Turner* the court noted that a right of access can be lost by repeated abuses and misconduct.¹⁶

A relatively recent Virginia case clarified further the issue of access routes. In *Wintergreen Homestead, LLC v. Pennington* the court ruled that property owners whose land contains a traditional access route to a private cemetery, but not the cemetery itself, do not have to allow visitors to use that route across their property to access the cemetery. This does not, however, relieve the cemetery owner of the obligation for providing a route across the cemetery owner's property. **When confronted with the hypothetical that a cemetery owner could in theory then sell all the land around a cemetery to third parties to block access, the court noted that the doctrines of easement by prescription, prior use, or necessity would still apply.**¹⁷ In other

words, absent repeated abuse and misconduct, cemetery owners will remain obligated to provide cemetery access to appropriate parties, subject to reasonable notice, hours, duration, and frequency constraints.

Conclusion

Issues arise with regard to private cemeteries that rarely occur when dealing with church or public graveyards. Tensions can run high, particularly when individuals are dealing with a sense of loss or perhaps even assumed guilt for a lack of knowledge of or neglect of a burial site. Increased awareness of the presence of private cemeteries and the basic legal obligations of owners and visitors may help prevent misunderstandings and avoid exacerbating situations already fraught with emotion. 



Earnie Porta received his JD and PhD from Georgetown University. He is an associate member of the Virginia State Bar and currently serves as mayor of the Town of Occoquan. He is a member of several historical organizations that deal with the identification, maintenance, and preservation of private cemeteries.

Endnotes

- 1 Michael E. Ruane, "In Virginia, protests arise as a forlorn cemetery is dug up to make way for high school football," *Washington Post*, December 2, 2013. "Exhumed remains may stay on site of Prince William's 12th high school," *InsideNova*, December 17, 2013 (Updated August 18, 2014).
- 2 Seth Freed Wessler, "Developers Found Graves in the Virginia Woods. Authorities Then Helped Erase the Historic Black Cemetery," *ProPublica*, December 16, 2022, <https://perma.cc/3LYJ-ERXQ> (accessed March 31, 2023).
- 3 Jill Palermo, "County pledges new protections for old cemeteries," *Prince William Times*, May 5, 2021 (Updated March 16, 2022).
- 4 See e.g., Va. Code § 54.1-2310; Prince William County, VA Code § 32-100. These definitions notably make clear that the sprinkling of ashes is not sufficient for an area to be defined as a cemetery. In this article I will use the terms cemetery, graveyard, and burial sites interchangeably.
- 5 Va. Code § 57-26(1). This same section, however, imposes other limits that apply to private cemeteries, including proximity to residences and wells.
- 6 Virginia allows municipal corporations to prohibit burials except in public cemeteries. Va. Code § 15.2-1111.
- 7 Members of the general public can help remedy the lack of information about private cemeteries by taking advantage of the Citizens Cemetery Recordation process offered by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR). By filling out a form on a previously unknown private cemetery, the cemetery can be added to the DHR database.
- 8 Va. Code § 15.2-978 specifically authorizes localities to set forth "a register of identified cemeteries, graveyards, or other places of burial located on private property," with exceptions for significant historical and archaeological sites that would be jeopardized by public disclosure.
- 9 Va. Code § 15.2-978.
- 10 See e.g., Fairfax County, Va. Code § 101-2-2(22); Prince William County, Va. Code § 32-250.110; Stafford County, Va. Code § 28-39(o).
- 11 *Bradley v. Virginia Railway*, 118 Va. 233 (1916); *Turner v. Turner*, 48 Va. Cir. 114 (Spotsylvania Cnty. 1999). The right is known as "incorporeal hereditament." At common law there was a substantive difference between an *exception* and a *reservation*. The latter technically involved a fee simple transfer to the grantee who in turn regranted a new (not pre-existing) easement to the grantor. In contrast, an *exception* specifically excluded from the transaction a pre-existing right (in this case the fee interest in the land used as a cemetery). Numerous sources, including *Bradly*, agree that the distinction between an *exception* and a *reservation* in American law has essentially evaporated and that the terms are likely to be treated synonymously.
- 12 Va. Code § 57-38.1.
- 13 Va. Code § 18.2-126 and Va. Code § 18.2-127. There may be circumstances in which an owner is required to protect a cemetery from grazing animals on its property.
- 14 Va. Code § 57-39.1.
- 15 Va. Code § 57-27.1.
- 16 *Turner v. Turner*, 48 Va. Cir. 114 (Spotsylvania Cnty. 1999).
- 17 *Wintergreen Homestead, LLC et. al. v. Bettie W. Pennington, et. al.* (No. 0136-22-2, 2022 Va. App. LEXIS 604 (Va. Ct. App., Nov. 29, 2022)).

The Good Ole Days

It seems like something is always catching my eye when I am trying to locate information on something, and it never is the something I am trying to locate. I get distracted and by the time I realize that I have got to get back on task, it is time to hit the hay. That scenario played out once again when I located a Staunton newspaper article in *The Valley Virginian*, written by the owners of *The Valley Virginian*, about *The Valley Virginian* while I was searching for something else. After reading it, and after what seems like enduring a lifetime of political bickering and negative news over the last few years, especially as of late, it was just a refreshing read. I have included the article² as well as a page from the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*³, which provides an all-you-want-to-know account of *The Valley Virginian* Newspaper. I believe I have left the links active so you can check other aspects of the page out and get off task all by yourself!

If you do decide to look over the Library of Congress page, take a look at what Samuel Yost did for Staunton while owner of the newspaper. I am referring to the column he began writing captioned *The Suffering Poor*. The newspaper was also known for including poetry in just about every issue. I have attached one such poem below that I picked from the *Staunton Spectator*, another Staunton newspaper during the same period⁴. I think after you read it you might just agree with me - Those were the good ole days as newspapers go.

For me, if it doesn't start out with "Roses are red, Violets are Blue....." then I have probably never read it, (or want to) but boy, this poem got my attention. I think this might just affect my New Year's resolution.

The Valley Virginian article is below.

Poetry.

Remember the Poor.

Remember the poor for bleak winds are blowing,
And brightly the frost-pearls are glist'ning
around.

The streamlets have ceased all their musical flow-
ing,

And snow-drifts lie scattered all over the
ground.

Remember the poor in their comfortless dwell-
ings,

Ill-clad and ill-fed and o'er burdened with care,
Oh, turn not away with a look so repelling—

Thy kindness may save them perhaps from
despair.

Remember the poor when the hearth-stone is
cheerful,

And happy hearts gather around its bright
blaze;

There are hearts that are sad and eyes that are
tearful;

As bright as thine own in their sunnier days.

Misfortunes may scatter thy present possessions,
And plenty, to poverty, leave thee a prey;

How bitterly then wilt thou think of the bles-
sings,

That Charity asks from thy riches to-day.

Remember the poor as you thankfully gather

Each round his rich table with luxury spread;

Thou, too, art a pensioner on a rich Father,

For health and for friendship, for raiment and
bread.

If he hath been bountiful, with a like spirit,

Dispense of that bounty what Charity claims;

Far greater the treasure thy soul shall inherit

When thy bread on the waters returneth again.

Remember the poor—this thou art commanded—

Thy Savior thus kindly remembered the poor;

"The destitute thou shalt not send empty-handed,
Unclad and unwarmed, and unfed from thy

door."

Thy peace in this life shall be like the deep river,

And dying, thy welcome to heaven shall be—

"Ye faithful and blessed of my Father—come
hither;

Ye did it to others—ye did it to me."

² Newspapers.com. *The Valley Virginian*, Staunton, Virginia. 7 April 1870. Page 2.

³ Library of Congress. *Chronicling America*. Historic American Newspapers. About *The Valley Virginia*. Retrieved 12-24-24. chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024707/

⁴ Newspapers.com. *The Staunton Spectator*, Staunton, Virginia. 25 January 1870. Page 1.

The Valley Virginian.

STAUNTON, VIRGINIA.

Thursday, - - - April 7, 1870.

TO OUR PATRONS AND FRIENDS.

With this issue commences the second year of our proprietorship and direction of the VALLEY VIRGINIAN.

When, a year ago, we assumed control of the paper we did so with many misgivings. Our predecessors had not found it a profitable investment, the subscription list was small—the patronage in the way of advertising and job work by no means encouraging—and the affairs of the office in a condition which demanded “reconstruction.”

We had no experience in the editorial management of a paper. We were young and without that education and training which is so necessary for the successful direction of a public journal. But we had strong arms and stout hearts. We knew how to work, and we determined to spare no effort to achieve success. Hope beckoned us onward, and necessity seconded the invitation to strenuous effort.

The first year of our editorial life has passed, and we are now able, with hearts filled with gratitude to the Great Dispenser of events, and to a generous public, to announce, that our labors have been crowned with success far beyond our most sanguine expectations.

Within the year, our subscription list has increased rapidly, and is now twice as large as when we issued our first number. Our advertising patronage and job work have grown in a corresponding ratio. We have kept clear of debt. We have furnished our office with ample supplies of material and we think we may confidently affirm, that we have placed the VALLEY VIRGINIAN on a firm and substantial basis.

We have endeavored to cultivate friendly relations with our cotemporaries, here and elsewhere. We entertain for them the kindest feelings, and shall always rejoice in their success. We do not look upon them as rivals, but as allies, who are co-operating with us in the great work of diffusing correct information among the people. Virtue and intelligence are the corner stones of free institutions. The press is one of the most powerful agents in inculcating sound morals, and diffusing useful knowledge. It is the national school master. The more newspapers—and the more widely they are circulated the better. The minds of men are so various that they must be approached and appealed to in various ways and by various means. What may exercise a powerful influence on some, will produce little effect on others. It is, therefore, for the public interest, that there should be a number of papers, presenting important subjects in various lights, so as to reach the minds and hearts of the greatest number.

In commencing our second volume we beg leave to tender to our patrons our heart-felt thanks for their generous support. We have doubtless committed many errors, and left many things undone which we ought to have done. But we can say, with perfect truth, that we have not intentionally done wrong to any one nor have we sought to wound the feelings of any one.

For the future we can only say that we will use our best efforts to deserve the confidence of our friends. We shall try to make our paper the vehicle of sound moral and political principles. We shall maintain a manly and independent position, truckling to no partizan influences, and pandering to no personal preferences. We shall keep the public welfare steadily in view, and if we fall into errors they will be errors of the head, not of the heart.

About The Valley Virginian. [volume] (Staunton, Va.) 1865-1895

Staunton, Va. (1865-1895)

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Title:

The Valley Virginian. [volume] : (Staunton, Va.) 1865-1895

Place of publication:

Staunton, Va.

Geographic coverage:

- Clifton Forge, Virginia | View more titles from this: [City State](#)
- Staunton, Virginia | View more titles from this: [City State](#)

Publisher:

A.M. Garber, Jr.

Dates of publication:

1865-1895

Description:

- Ceased in 1895?
- Vol. [1], no. [1] (Nov. 29, 1865)- ; old ser. v.26, no. 4 = new ser. v.1, no. 1-

Frequency:

Weekly

Language:

- English

Subjects:

- Clifton Forge (Va.)--Newspapers.
- Staunton (Va.)--Newspapers.
- Virginia--Clifton Forge.--fast--(OCoLC)fst01222281
- Virginia--Staunton.--fast--(OCoLC)fst01204696

Notes:

- Also issued on microfilm from Bell & Howell, Micro Photo Div.
- Published at Clifton Forge, Va., May 14, 1891-1895? Cf. Cappon, L.J. Va. newspapers.
- Publisher varies: A.M. Garber, Jr., J. Richard Crockwell, (July 11, 1866)- ; J.R. Crockwell, Jan. 6, 1868- <Mar.> 1869 ; Stoneburner & Co., <Apr. 29>, 1869- Aug. 25, 1870 ; Stoneburner & Pemberton, Sept. 1- Nov. 24, 1870; S.M. Yost, Dec. 8, 1870- Oct. 1, 1874; S.M. Yost & Son, <1876> ; Clifton Forge Pub. Co., May 14, 1891-Nov. 17, 1892 ; Taylor and Eichelberger, Nov. 24, 1892-Mar. 30, 1893 ; D.S. Eichelberger, Apr. 6, 1893-Jan. 25, 1894 Eichelberger & Walton, Feb. 1, 1894 ; N.A. Walton & W.C.C. Vanneman, Feb. 8, 1894-

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The Valley Virginian. [volume] January 17, 1866 , Image 1

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The Valley Virginian

Staunton, located in western Virginia about sixty miles north of Lynchburg, served as an army depot, commissary post, and training camp for the Confederacy for much of the Civil War with Confederate generals Stonewall Jackson and Jubal Early encamped there at some point during the war. In 1864, though, the Union army broke the Confederate hold on Staunton and laid "waste to much of the town and miles of nearby railroad track." It was in the war's aftermath that *The Valley Virginian* began publication in Staunton on November 29, 1865.

Circulated every Wednesday by Alexander Menzies Garber, Jr. on the third floor of the Burwell building at Main and New Streets, *The Valley Virginian* was Staunton's lone Republican newspaper. While the city's population was only about 6,000 to 7,000 from 1860 into the 1890s, Staunton produced an impressive array of newspaper publications along with *The Valley Virginian*, including the [*Staunton Spectator*](#) and [*Staunton Vindicator*](#), among others. Staunton was not a large city, but it was located at the crossroads of several railroads and home to the Standard Iron Works, several educational institutions, the Western Lunatic Asylum and the Virginia Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind (now called the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind), which might explain its prodigious press history.

Early in its life, the *Virginian* devoted ample copy reminiscing about the war and included reports from other newspapers like the [*Richmond Wig*](#) and the [*Richmond Enquirer*](#). It also provided political news out of Washington, local news, poetry, advertisements, real estate announcements, railroad news, and listed local marriages and deaths. From November 6 to December 18, 1867, Garber, a University of Virginia graduate and Confederate war veteran, partnered with J. R. Crockwell, who had established the *Covington Times*, to produce *The Valley Virginian*. In April 1869, Stoneburner and Co. took over the paper. "There are three journals published in Staunton," explained the new owner in the April 29, 1869 issue, "we would like to make the *Virginian* different from all others—more original—more domestic, and less a partisan paper."

On December 8, 1870, Samuel M. Yost, who ran the paper longer than anyone before or after him, became proprietor of the *Virginian*. In January 1877, Yost began publishing a column titled, "The Suffering Poor" about the problem of poverty in Staunton. "It may not be known to many of our readers," he wrote on January 11, 1877, "that actual want exists in our little city. It may not be pleasant for them to be told of it, but such is the harsh, disagreeable fact." He called for systematic relief to feed Staunton's hungry and printed examples of the struggles experienced by the town's less prosperous residents. Thanks to Yost's editorials in the *Virginian*, a free lunch-house opened during one of Staunton's harshest winters, sustaining many local families in need.

During its time, *The Valley Virginian* had the highest circulation of any paper in Staunton, with about 1,800–2,500 subscribers. The last issue published in Staunton came out on April 23, 1891 and the *Virginian* ceased publication until May 14, when it picked up again, somewhat mysteriously, in the much smaller town of Clifton Forge, about sixty miles southwest of Staunton. "The changes of location, in this instance and under the conditions of the change," Yost explained, "imply a modification of the policy of the *Virginian* in a political sense." It went on to say that it would aim to bring together "the energies and the co-operation of all classes of the people, whether Democrats, Republicans, Alliance men or Mugwumps." After Yost left the paper in May 1892, *The Valley Virginian* had several different publishers before ceasing altogether sometime in 1895.

Provided by: [Library of Virginia; Richmond, VA](#)

Some Final Thoughts

A couple of housekeeping matters:

I hope that the newsletter and care of the cemetery are worthy of your time and interest and if so, I hope you choose to renew your membership when it is time. If there is some reason that you won't, and I can address that issue because of something I have or have not done to your liking please let me know. I will do my best to make things right. Your membership is important, and the contributions are much needed.

Don't forget to log on to the website when you visit it. That is the only way you can access the files, the hundreds of files, that have been uploaded to the site. Just as an example, there are 793 obituaries uploaded and at your fingertips as of this newsletter's mailing. And as you can see by the enumerations at the bottom of each newsletter, most categories grow in file size each month.

No jokes to end out the newsletter this month. It's a new 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 – 163 Total

Obituaries & Death Notices – 793 (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.

Until next month, Blessings, Happy Trails, and Happy New Year.

Glenn Hanger

President, Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery