

THE HEADSTONE

Vol. IV

June 2026

Issue VI

Greetings to all and Happy soon-to-be summer. For those to which it applies, Happy Father's Day. Given that we all have fathers, still living or not, I argue that the day applies to all of us and all of them. Rain has finally made its way to Dutch Hollow. Everyone is thankful for that, and most are still praying for more. We are still short as averages go, but all I talk to are thankful for what we have received. Corn and soybeans are being planted, and gardens are being put in. We had a freeze warning the night of May 11th, but it did not get as cold as they thought it would in Dutch Hollow while other spots close by had hard freezes. That same day our son Adam and his wife were visiting Death Valley as part of their trip out west to attend the National Stagecoach and Freightwagon Association annual meeting. He called back to report a temperature at the ranger station of 117 degrees. I'll pass.

New Website Update

So the new website has officially launched and most everyone should have gotten an email to that effect back on May 21st. One of the neat things about the new site is the search abilities we will have for records. They are all compiled in what the experts call a Unified Data Module, which means when you search the name Robinson Hanger for example, all the records will come up for Robinson that are in there – Marriage, death, burial, etc., to include any other record in there that his name is in. So far I have gotten almost 1600 records in that module, and I have built another 1100 in other non-search modules. I hope that after all this work there is at least a little something that each of us can use to our benefit when researching.

If you have not been to the site yet it can be reached by clicking this link. <https://dhhcemetary.org> I still have a lot of files, hundreds and hundreds, ready to be uploaded and I will continue to add files each month as I find them. The schoolhouse records are just a framework for now. There is a lot of data to be added to those records yet. Student names, teachers, years in service, etc. It takes time but I will continue to knock at it. Just making a conservative preliminary estimate, there were probably over two hundred one-room schoolhouses in Augusta County in the mid-to-late 1800s. So go to the website login using your username and password and if you have an trouble whatsoever, email me right away.

A New Life Membership

Ted Harrison, my seventh cousin who lives in Missouri became our latest and fifth Life member. He actually made that commitment last month and while I included him on the last page of the May newsletter as such, I failed to offer public thanks to him for doing that. Thank you Ted. I called Ted just after receiving his membership contribution and got caught up just a bit with him. We first officially met when he made the pilgrimage to Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery March 23, 2025, and I have been a worry to him ever since. So many of the Hangers and their families moved west just before the war, some in the very early 1800s, and Ted has been my go-to and sounding board when it comes to my research on those families. While these

Hanger family units ended up throughout the Mississippi and Ohio Valleys, a good percentage chose Shelby County, Audrain County, and Monroe County, Missouri to homestead. Ted is a very conscientious researcher and when he provides information it is correct and with accompanying documentation. Again Ted, thank you.

Work at Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery

After two episodes of tree removal, one last September and the second just this past March 10th, I was a little worried that what grass we had in the cemetery had suffered an unrecoverable tragedy. As it turns out I have mowed twice and most of the sod damage seems to be slowly recovering. Herbicide was applied to the lane and most if not all of the weeds and wire grass seem to be at bay for the present time.

Revolutionary War Patriots in Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery

The DAR/SAR has two of our burials in Dutch Hollow listed as Revolutionary War Patriots. Johanes Fulwider and George Adam Bright. With 183 unmarked grave in Dutch Hollow I have absolutely no doubt that there are more. With this being the 250th anniversary of our United States it did cross my mind that it would be nice to do something to honor those patriots. As it turns out I did not have to search for what to do or make a request of someone to do it.

Paul Parish, a name you have heard of before from previous newsletters, sent me an email back on April 10th. He wrote, *"Good evening, my friend. Hope you are doin' well. I have a proposition to discuss with you. I have managed to persuade the Middlebrook Ruritans to sponsor putting Betsy Ross flags on the graves of known Rev War vets from the area. I have the names of two known to be buried at Dutch Hollow from DAR/SAR records and am certain there are more, some you may know."*

I'd like to coordinate a time to place the flags there, maybe with a group of friends of the cemetery, and I could also provide a narration and a musket firing, if that would suit you.

Please let me know your thoughts on this.

Thanks,

P.

What a kind gesture and what an honor to have Paul do this! I will keep everyone posted on when this event might take place and hopefully those within a reasonable travel distance can attend.

Cemetery Preservation Training Course

While there is much to write about, spring is a busy time for us all. Sometimes you might be too busy to read the newsletter and sometimes I might almost be too busy to write one. One thing that I will elaborate on in the coming months is a long-term and hopefully permanent program that the Augusta County Historical Society is planning to undertake. Preparations are being made to offer a cemetery preservation training course in the spring of 2027 for those who wish to undertake the task of saving one or more of the hundreds of cemeteries we have in Augusta County. Most of these cemeteries are all but forgotten by most, with only a handful of folks even knowing how to get to where some of them are located. The training will cover everything from securing permission to securing funding sources with all of the technical and hands-on

training in between. A number of preservation professionals will be speaking to the group and while these plans are very much in their infancy, this may be just what saves a number of our cemeteries from becoming a memory. Our goal is to also establish a grant fund to help folks with a little of the expense. I will keep you posted on progress.

Keller Cemetery

Keller cemetery is one of the oldest cemeteries in Augusta County. I would argue that fewer than a dozen folks know where it is located accurately enough to ever find it. I was on one those folks until Monday, May 18th. And the sad thing about that is, I have a 5g great-aunt buried there.

Deb Lavalle and her husband Tom were planning a trip to Augusta County as they have done several times each year for some time now. Deb has ancestral connections to Cook-Teaford Cemetery, which is off Morris Mill Road about five miles west of Staunton, and when not down south from their home in Connecticut to attend to the ongoing preservation project there, they try to take in other aspects of their history. Such was the case with Keller cemetery.

Deb made arrangements with an adjoining landowner to gain access who also knew the best path to reach the cemetery and Deb also firmed up previously secured permission from the landowner on whose land the cemetery is situated. I agreed to accompany Deb and just to be clear, she did not have to twist my arm to get me to immediately say “you bet I will go with you.” Nancy Sorrells also agreed to go and on Monday morning we all met at the adjoining landowner’s home. I was greeted with the salutation of “I think we are cousins!” And after checking I discovered that I was being led to Keller Cemetery by my 4th cousin. Her 3g grandparents and my 3g grandparents were one and the same. John and Catherine Wehrle Hanger, buried at none other than Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery. As we began our trek through some pretty thick forest growth for what would be about a ½ mile steep hike I was already counting the trip as a success as a result of shaking the hand of yet another heretofore unknown cousin. And that 4th cousin got us right to the spot. On the way she sent me ahead with the instruction, “look for a really big oak tree.” We were in the middle of several thousand acres of really big oak trees, but then I saw a really big oak tree. One that is without question older than our United States. I yelled back to the group, “I think I found it.” After everyone joined up under the canopy of the magnificent oak and we took in our surroundings a bit, we began, in and amongst the briars and brambles, to see headstones, footstones and broken pieces of the same.



This Old White Oak stands in the center of Keller Cemetery

We were able to get some photographs, estimate the dimensions, and get an accurate pin on the GPS coordinates. Keller Cemetery is referenced by a number of names, Allen Cemetery, Keller Cemetery, Geeding-Keller Cemetery, and Allen-Geeding-Keller Cemetery. I have only known it as Keller, and there are those that say there is actually another cemetery in the same section of forest that is the Allen Cemetery but that is an investigation for another day.

Deb's desire is to take some steps, with the landowner's blessings, to clear the cemetery of the invasive flora, reset and repair the headstones, and maybe even deploy GPR at some point. One of the issues with doing preservation work at Keller is that there are no roads or trails leading to it to ferry hand tools and while it is on a very flat plateau, the land drops off steeply in most directions. We estimated the cemetery to be roughly 100 ft. X 100 ft. but when it comes to graveyards appearances can be deceiving of course as unmarked graves can extend well beyond what appears to be the perimeter.

As for my 5g great aunt, that would be Anna Barbara Hanger (1736-1782), wife of George Keller (1732-1816). Anna arrived in Philadelphia on December 3, 1740, at age four aboard the ship Robert and Alice with her father, Johann Melchoir Hengerer (Hanger), her mother Maria Elizabetha Majer Hengerer, and her siblings. They had sailed from Rotterdam with a stop in route at Cowes, England before making the crossing.

Keller is one of the oldest documented cemeteries in Augusta County with known burials there as early as 1753. One such older grave there is that for William Crawford. The stone in the photo right has faint makings that indicate it is his and it is listed on Find A Grave as his but listed in the "Allen Cemetery," an example of the confusion created by one cemetery being referred to by different names. William, son of Alexander Crawford, died in 1792. It is well documented by Joseph Waddell¹ that during the last Indian raid in the western part of Augusta County that William Crawford's parents, Alexander Crawford and his wife Mary McPheeters Craford were killed during that raid along with a number of other settlers. Alexander and Mary are buried in the not-to-distant Glebe Cemetery. The raid was believed to have taken place in October of 1764, and evidence indicates that it was definitely prior to 20 Nov 1764. An excerpt from Waddell's work is below which describes the last raid, including the death of William Crawford's parents.



All cemeteries hold history, mostly silent stories of course, but the history is there. When cemeteries as old as Keller are found and researched, history that might otherwise be lost very much comes to life. So many of our ancestors had hardships that even the hardest of folks nowadays cannot comprehend. It is to these men and women that we owe a debt of gratitude. As I see it, the best way to pay that debt is to remember them and continue to tell their story.

Waddell's *Annals of Augusta County* is available on Ancestry in its entirety, and he covers in documented detail the Indian Wars in Augusta County from 1753 until the last raid in 1764 when the Crawfords and others were killed or taken prisoner. I will keep everyone apprised of any progress made at Keller Cemetery or any of the hundreds of other cemeteries just like it.

¹ Waddell, J. A. (1902) *Annals of Augusta County, Virginia, From 1726 to 1871*. C. Russell Caldwell, Staunton, Virginia. P. 192-193.

Alexander Crawford, the elder of the two, married Mary McPheeters, but whether in Ireland or America is not known. He acquired an extensive tract of land in Augusta, covering a part of the Little North mountain, and extending far out into the plain. It embraced sixteen hundred and forty acres. His dwelling stood on a knoll, at the eastern base of the mountain, and looked out towards the rising sun on a wide tract of level land. It was "beautiful for situation." The spot is about two miles northeast of Buffalo Gap, and a hundred yards south of the present residence of Baxter Crawford, a great-grand-son of Alexander and Mary. The site of the house is now marked by a thicket, surrounding a pile of unhewn stones which composed the chimney.

Here Alexander and Mary Crawford had eleven children, seven sons and four daughters. They had an abundance of all the good things the times and country afforded, and until the Indian wars arose, lived in peace and plenty. They belonged to a God-fearing race, and doubtless walked in the old ways of their pious ancestors. The father and mother, were, however, both slaughtered by savages, on their premises, with no human eye near enough to witness the tragedy.

Much uncertainty has existed as to the date of the occurrence. But at November County Court, 1764, William McPheeters qualified as administrator of Alexander Crawford, and, although some of the latter's descendants insist upon an earlier date, it seems highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that the slaughter was perpetrated by some of the Indians who made the second raid upon Kerr's Creek, in October of the year mentioned.

The rumor had gone abroad that an invasion by Indians was threatened, and all the Crawford family had taken refuge in a house at the Big Spring. This house was called a fort, being better able to resist an attack than most dwellings of the period, and was often resorted to by the people around in times of danger. It is probably the ancient stone house, still standing and used as a dwelling, on the south side of Middle river, two miles south of the present village of Churchville, and about three miles from Alexander Crawford's. It has long been known as the "old Keller house." The windows are few in number and very narrow, hardly more than a foot wide.

On the day of the slaughter, early in the morning, it is said, Alexander Crawford and his wife returned home to procure a supply of vegetables, while two of their sons, William and John, went upon the mountain to salt the horses which had been turned out to graze. From their elevation on the side of the mountain, the two youths saw the smoke and flames of the burning homestead. On the same day, probably, the home of John Trimble, some three miles off, on Middle River, was assailed, as is related elsewhere.

We may imagine that the men of the neighborhood were somewhat slow to assemble. No one knew but his house would be attacked next, and every man felt it necessary to protect his own family if possible. When the people rallied and repaired to the Crawford place, the dwelling had been consumed by fire. The charred remains of Alexander Crawford were found in the ashes, showing that he had been killed in the house. His wife's body was found outside, and it was inferred that she had attempted to escape, but was overtaken and tomahawked. The remains of both were gathered up and buried in the Glebe grave-yard.

The sale-bill of Alexander Crawford's personal estate amounted to £334, 17s, 9d, about \$1,114, a larger sum than was common at that day. We mention as some indication of the state of the times, that among the articles sold by the administrator were a still and a wolf-trap. All the family records and other household effects perished with the dwelling.

It is related that Alexander Crawford was ambitious to be the founder of "a clan," such as we read of in Scottish history, and impressed it upon his children that they must respect the right of primogeniture then existing by law. His oldest son, William, did not approve of the scheme, and thus his father's wishes were defeated. The latter was a skilled worker in iron.

The children of Alexander and Mary Crawford were—

I. William Crawford, who is named first in every list. In an old grave-yard, on a high hill overlooking Middle river, on the farm of the late Ephraim Geeding, is an ancient sand-stone, flat on the ground and broken in two. The inscription upon it, which is nearly illegible, is as follows:

Wm Crawford
"Wm. Crawford, departed this life October 15, 1792, aged 48 years."

He was therefore twenty years old when his parents were massacred. His will was proved in court at December term, 1792. In it he mentions his wife, Rachel, and his children, Alexander, James, John, William, George, Polly, Nancy, Jenny and Rachel. He also alludes to James Elliott as a neighboring land-owner, and from this person, probably, the highest point of the Great North Mountain was named. Of the children of William Crawford—

William Crawford
1. Alexander married Rachel Lessley, and his children were, (1.) William, whose wife was a daughter of Colonel Andrew Anderson, and whose children are Andrew A. Crawford, Mrs. Baxter Crawford, Mrs. Joseph B. Trimble and others. His youngest son, James Robert, graduated at the Virginia Military Institute, served on the staff of Colonel William L. Jackson during the late war, was wounded at Droop Mountain, and died April 26, 1864. (2.) Polly married James Lessley, her second cousin, and is still living (1888) on a part of the domain acquired by her great-grandfather, Alexander. (3.) Rebecca, wife of Captain James Bell, whom she long survived. (4.) James, who married his full cousin, Rachel, daughter of John Crawford, and died in Texas.

Visitors From Indiana

Back on March 17th I reached out to Mary Ellen Kutas in Indiana after I was forwarded an inquiry that she sent to the Augusta County Historical Society looking for information on the Summers and Engleman families of Augusta County, she being a descendant of those clans. As it turns out, the Hanger and Engleman families intermarried extensively and I did have information. The result was a road trip by Mary Ellen and her son Jared to Augusta County on May 11th to do some research and see where her ancestors started their trek west. It was a great visit for me, and it just illustrates the purpose for getting Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery restored to a level that folks can come and visit and learn more about their very own history.

I met them at Saint John's Church Cemetery just north of Middlebrook where the vast majority of early 18th century German immigrants to southern Augusta County worshiped and those not buried in Dutch Hollow or family plots elsewhere were laid to rest, her ancestors being no

exception. From there we went to Dutch Hollow and Mary Ellen was able to stand on the land that in 1809 Samuel Summers sold to my 3g Grandfather John Hanger, Sr., on which of course Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery lies. I think it was a rewarding trip for Mary Ellen and Jared, and I know it was for me.



Mary Ellen Kutas at Saint John's Church, Middlebrook, Virginia, March 13, 2026



Mary Ellen and Jared at Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery March 13, 2026

The photo of Mary Ellen at Saint John's and the one of Mary Ellen and Jared at the cemetery are great pictures but perhaps the picture that really does speak a thousand words in the history and genealogy world is the photo below of Mary Ellen's license plate. Thank you Mary Ellen and Jared for visiting, and to all those other cousins out there. And to top it off, Mary Ellen is now our very newest Lifetime Member!! I hope everyone enjoys the newsletter.



Planned Programs

Augusta Co. Historical Society

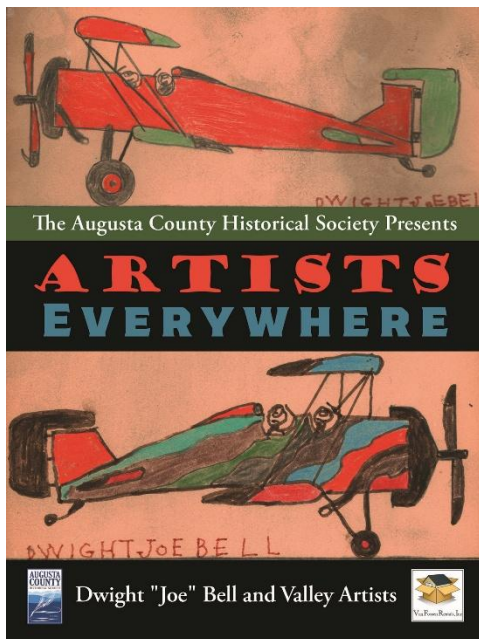
Dates: February 19, 2026, to June 05, 2026, Time: 01:00 PM to 04:00 PM

Location: Location: History Gallery, R.R. Smith Center for History and Art 20 S. New Street Staunton, VA Exhibit is open until early June. Gallery hours are Tuesday & Friday 1-4 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Augusta County Historical Society 2026 Spring Event

The Augusta County Historical Society Presents "Artists Everywhere: Dwight 'Joe' Bell and Valley Artists"

Reminder: The Gallery hours are Tuesday-Friday 1-4 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m.-2 p.m.





Augusta Co. Genealogical Society

Date: June 17, 2026 Time: 01:00 PM to 03:00 PM

Location: Augusta County Library - Lower-Level Room, 1759

Jefferson Hwy, Fishersville, VA 22939, USA

"What's a Glebe?"

About the event "What's a Glebe?" presented by Nancy Sorrells,
Local Historian & Author

Website Updates: Members Section

LIFE MEMBERS

Al Wilkerson 2025 Glenn Hanger 2025 Crim Lotts 2025

Michael Clinebell 2025 Ted Harrison 2026 Mary Ellen Kutas 2026

With the new website up and running and accessible to all those that choose to use the information therein, starting next month rather than keeping a tally of what is on the website, I may endeavor to just list what was added the month preceding the newsletter. Below are just a few of the records that have already been uploaded to the new site.

Death Records	1,189
Burial Records	138
Marriage Records	186
Miscellaneous Records, Documents, & Photos	1,303
Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Records and Maps	304

Until next month, Blessings, Happy Father's Day, and Happy Trails,

Glenn Hanger

President, Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery