

THE HEADSTONE

Vol. IV

September 2026

Issue IX

Greetings to all and happy soon to be fall! If you are like me you are wondering just exactly where the summer went. Time seems to fly by anymore but then again my elders warned me for years that this would happen and like most of our elders they were correct. Weather report: same as August, July, and June; Hot and Dry. I did a little checking and last year as of September 1 I had logged exactly 75 hours mowing and weed eating the cemetery for the 2025 season. As of September 1 of this year, 19.25 hours. That is just how dry it has been here. Oh well, the rain will come. Thanks be for those that have gotten rain.

Declaring Someone Deceased

While during my 33.5 year law enforcement career I was involved in a number of cases where death occurred yet a body was never found, I was never involved in the aftermath of the declaration of death process. Yet doing a little genealogy work on some of my own kin folk, I came face to face with the documentation of one such case. It involves Edna H. *Wilson* Hanger.

According to the 1875 Augusta County Birth Register Edna was probably born on December 4, 1875. I use the word probably because while her parents are listed, Edna's first name is not. Her parents were Daniel and Annie *Dudley* Wilson. She married David Franklin Hanger. David died 9 Oct 1902. There is no mention of children in his obituary¹ nor on Find A Grave. This left Edna widowed at a relatively early age (27 if her DOB is correct), yet virtually no mention of her has been found since she was widowed just doing a cursory search. Unverified dates found were for her marriage to David 18 Sep 1901. Also found on the 1930 U. S. Census was an Edna W. Hanger listed as a boarder in a residence in the borough of Manhattan, New York at 27 West 19th St. She is listed as being born in Virginia of Virginia born parents. She listed employment as an operator. She is listed as widowed and being 26 when first married. But the age listed is 45. That does not compute with her unverified (Ancestry private tree) birth year, and if the age 45 is correct in the census and she was in fact married at age 26, this is not the Edna W. Hanger I am looking for. But as you know, when the genealogical stars are aligned incorrectly by someone, it could still be her. But I have allowed myself to digress from the topic and take you with me. Worth noting however is the

Death of D. Frank Hanger.

D. Frank Hanger, son of the late D. W. Hanger, died Thursday morning at the home of his sister, Mrs. Frank H. Gilkeson, Barterbrook, after an illness of about a year, of consumption, aged about 28 years. He went to Saranac Lake and spent some months, returning about a month ago, but received no benefit, having waited, it is said, too long.

The funeral was held at Tinkling Spring Friday at noon, conducted by the pastor of the deceased, Rev. George W. Finley, D. D.

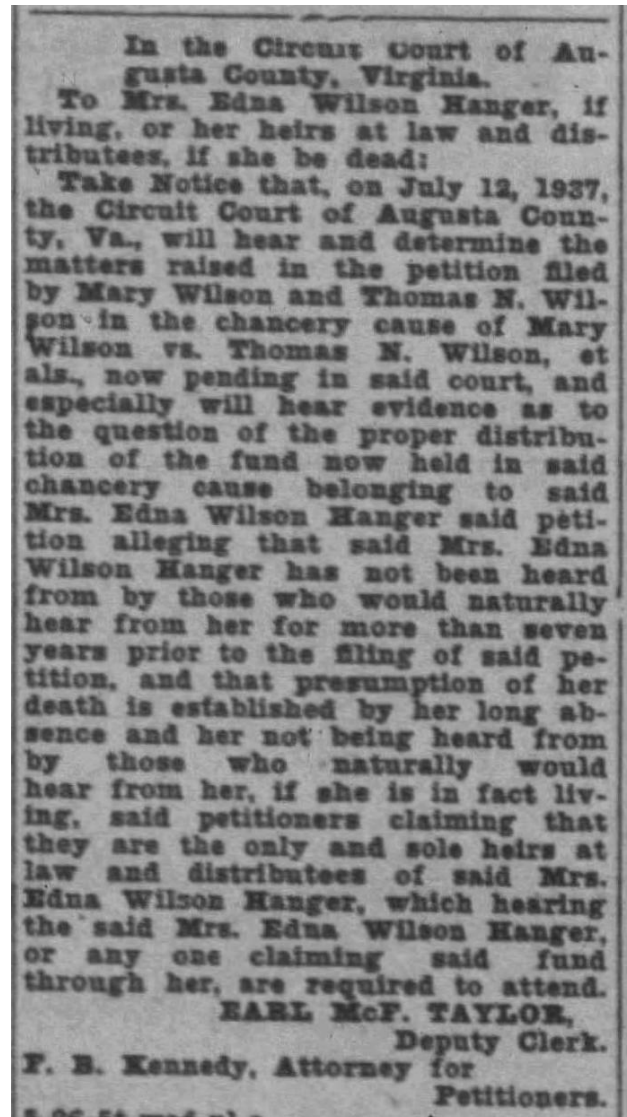
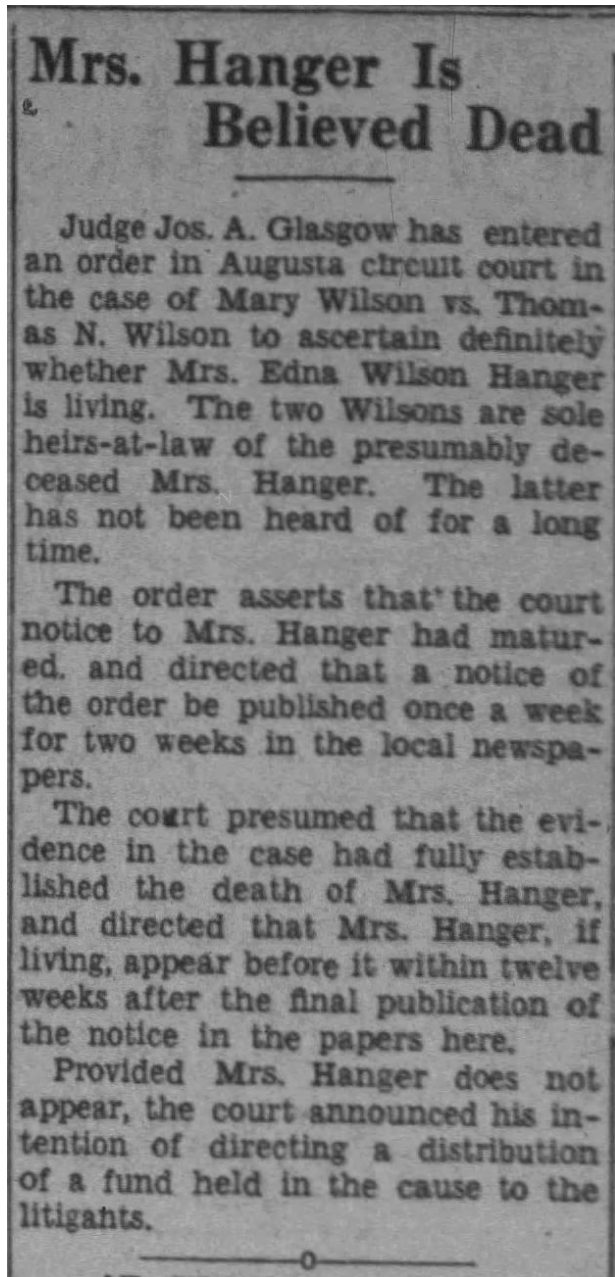
Mr. Hanger is survived by his wife, who was Miss Edna Wilson, and by five sisters, Mrs. F. H. Gilkeson, Mrs. John W. Brand of the county, Mrs. Frank Morasy of Illinois, Mrs. Paxton of Natural Bridge, Miss Alice Hanger of the county and three brothers, Newton and Elmer of the county and William of California.

¹ Newspapers.com. The News Leader, Staunton, Virginia. 23 June 1937. Page 7.

fact that her husband had been in New York just prior to his death and it could be inferred that she accompanied him and was at least familiar with the state.

In a 23 June 1937 Staunton, Virginia newspaper² a chancery notice was listed by Edna's heirs petitioning Edna to, if alive, appear along with any other of her heirs on 12 Jul 1937, otherwise the petitioners would move forward claiming themselves as sole heirs to her estate.

On 22 Jul 1937, just ten days after the scheduled chancery hearing, the following article appeared in the Staunton Leader³.



The required newspaper notices were posted according to Judge Glasgow's order up until 27 July 1937. Nothing can be found after that date in the local newspapers involving the case. Was Edna declared dead? Was she in fact dead? Was the Edna W. Hanger in Manhattan in 1930 the same Edna Wilson Hanger? Short of going to the courthouse and determining the outcome of the case to answer these questions, this is all I have found on Edna Wilson Hanger, which is in two words, not much.

Her husband, David Franklin Hanger, was my 4th cousin 3 X removed and was the 3g grandson of

Peter Hanger, Sr. and Anna Gabbert Hanger.

² Newspapers.com. The News Leader, Staunton, Virginia. 23 June 1937. Page 7.

Conflicting Documents That We Find

Maybe as either a footnote to or even an exclamation point for the previous case involving Edna, I felt compelled to share a couple of articles I found while doing some research on the Lotts family. It is just one more example of how hazardous it is to hang one's research hat on ANY one piece of documentation. Of course we often have no choice since many times there may only be one piece of documentation. But when we find three or more pieces and none of them agree, it can get frustrating. Case in point, Samuel Lotts. Samuel died in 1912.

The following is what we can learn about Samuel and his death from three newspaper articles written at that time.

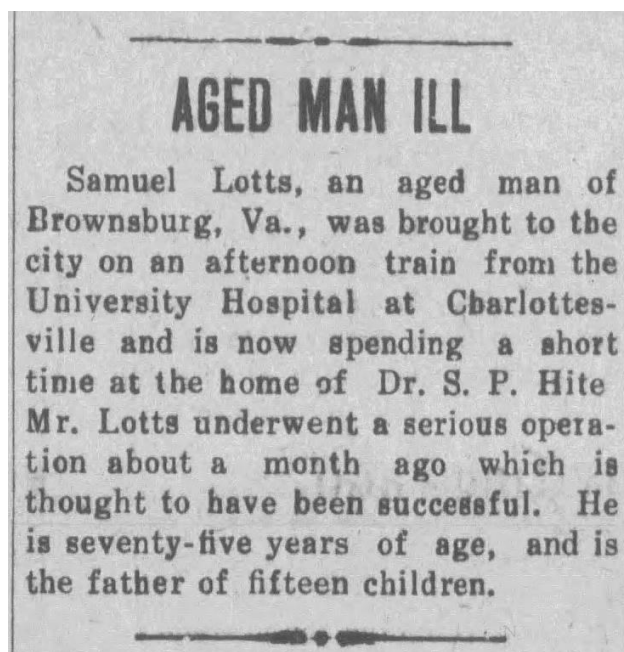
Article 1. Published 18 June 1912⁴

Samuel lived in Brownsburg

Samuel was 75 years old

Samuel was the father of 15 children

Samuel had a serious operation a month earlier and was brought from the University of Virginia to Staunton on the train and was recovering at Dr. S. P. Hite's home.



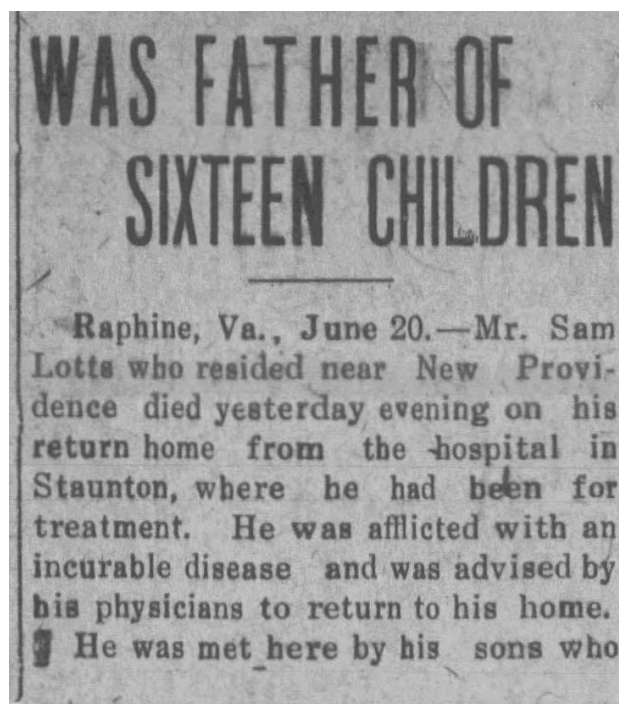
Article 2. Published 21 June 1912⁵

Samuel lived near New Providence

Samuel was nearly 80 old

Samuel was the father of 16 children

Samuel died in route home while being transported there from the hospital in Staunton, Virginia.



⁴ Newspapers.com. *The Evening Leader*, Staunton, Virginia. 18 June 1912. Page 3.

⁵ Newspapers.com. *The Evening Leader*, Staunton, Virginia. 21 June 1912. Page 7.

Article 3. Published 25 June 1912⁶

Samuel resided at the Rockbridge Co. & Augusta Co. line

Samuel was a Confederate veteran

Samuel was 75 years old

Samuel was survived by 8 children

Died while being taken home from the hospital and was within sight of his house when he died.

Let me first say that this is not intended as a newspaper bashing nor should it be construed as a mockery of Samuel's death. To the contrary, it is about us as researchers and when we hang our research hat on a piece of documentation that we believe to be correct. Newspapers are excellent sources of information but like every other piece of information that has ever been recorded with human hands, there can be errors. We would have certainly taken any one of these articles standing alone and went with what the editor wrote. But when you have three that are in questionable agreement with each other and published by the same newspaper, what do you do? I think the proper answer is to do more research and determine the facts about Samuel but if these three articles were all we had, we would have no choice but to document all the information and point out the discrepancies. All three articles contain facts for sure. For example, New Providence is somewhat near the Augusta and Rockbridge line. Brownsburg is somewhat

near New Providence. But each are also three distinct locations. In the first article Samuel may have come to Dr. Hite's in Staunton and then readmitted to the University Hospital a second time, but the article does not say that. The third article says that the Valley road was delayed two hours. I feel sure this is a reference to the railroad as the term "road" was used extensively if not exclusively during the 1800s when speaking of the railroad, and the line from Staunton to Raphine, arguably the closest depot to Samuel's residence, was called the Valley Railroad but again the article doesn't say any of that either. I am sure that every reader of this has encountered these same issues. I just thought the articles about Samuel's death might be a good

DEATH OF SAMUEL LOTTS

Mr. Samuel Lotts, Confederate veteran, who resided on the Rockbridge and Augusta line, and who has a large relationship in Augusta, died on the 19th instant. Mr. Lotts had been to the University Hospital at Charlottesville, where he underwent a serious operation from which only slight relief was obtained, and his friends were trying to get him back home before he should die. The Valley road was two hours late, and the delay and the strain caused thereby probably caused death to come more quickly. He passed away while on the road in sight of his home.

Mr. Lotts was about 75 years old. wife and eight children survive him, four daughters and four sons: John W., James S., George R., and Edward F. Lotts, and Mrs. Bettie A. Smiley, Mrs. Laura C. Carwell, Mrs. Martha W. Dudley and Miss Maggie Lotts, the last named making her home with Miss Nannie E. Hite, being the only member of the family who has not married.

Mr. Lotts was a brave and faithful soldier, and a man greatly respected in the community in which he resided. The burial took place Thursday at New Providence church, and was largely attended.

⁶ Newspapers.com. *Staunton Daily Leader*, Staunton, Virginia. 25 June 1912. Page 5.

reminder of just how tough it is to get it right. I seem to be reminded every time I try to hang my research hat on a nail I find.

Goings-On at Dutch Hollow

As stated at the opening of the newsletter, what's not going on is mowing and weed eating. I am not complaining about that, but the grass probably is.

The first Monday in August I was delighted to meet with Pauline McKee who had been wanting to visit Dutch Hollow for several years. I got to know Pauline through her dedicated work at the McKee / Big Spring Cemetery at Kerr's Creek in Rockbridge County. If you recall I have written about her and her work a number of times and most recently in last month's newsletter, detailing the wonderful marking of James Logan McKee's grave as a Revolutionary Patriot. Pauline and I have conversed often and she has been a wonderful person to bounce things off of. Below is a photo of Pauline during her visit. It was indeed a pleasure to be able to show her a little about the cemetery.



On August 4th Mike and Janet Clinebell made a pilgrimage from Aiken, South Carolina to Dutch Hollow. It was their second visit with the first being September 18, of 2022. We had a wonderful time getting caught up on things and they were also able to visit The Glebe Cemetery. Mike and I are 5th cousins as a result of his and my 3g grandmothers being sisters. Mike enjoys hunting around his home in South Carolina and while here he got to see both turkeys and deer at and around Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery. We finished off the day together at Edelweiss Restaurant eating as our ancestors once did - authentic German food.



Work has been going on at Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery since October of 2019 or thereabouts. Since that time I have regularly questioned things that I continue to search for answers to, and I have certainly kept my eyes peeled for any evidence of headstones and the like as I continue to try to improve the landscape. Most of the headstones were reset as I found them, using existing footstones or the headstone base if there was one as a guide to know exactly where the headstone belonged. Sometimes the headstones needed repairs which were done usually at the same time they were reset. But there was one stone that I held off repairing. It was the headstone marking the grave of Andrew Lucas.

Below is a picture of Andrew's Headstone in February of 2020. The arrow points to a piece of broken marble with the smallest broken part of that marble still missing. I did not make the repairs when I reset the stone because I just knew I would find that piece easy enough and use the original for the repair.



When 2023 rolled around and I still had not found the missing piece of broken marble I did the honorable thing and repaired the stone the best way I knew how given our budget. A photo of that repair is below. I bet by now you know where this story is going. As a side note, looking at the condition of the cemetery in 2020 in the photo above, I am not quite sure how we got it to where it is today. What a dismal picture!



After the repair job I certainly did not quit looking for the missing piece but to some extent I had resolved that I would never find it. 2024 came and went as did 2025. No broken piece of marble showed itself. And then this year while weed eating, on July 23rd to be exact, I spotted what appeared to be a piece of cut marble protruding from mother earth. Yep, you guessed it, the missing piece from Andrew's Headstone. It was near the footstone for Dianah Lucas (Lucas) and exactly 29 feet 4 inches UP THE HILL from where Andrew's headstone resides. How it got there I do not know but it is the missing piece. So I will preserve that little piece of marble and if and when my repair job gives up I will put it back right where it belongs. Lesson for those of us that work on old cemeteries in our spare time – don't give up.



Another similarly rewarding event occurred while Mike and Janet Clinebell were visiting. While we were standing near Maria Kaufelt Bright's headstone and just at the foot of the grave suspected to be that of her husband, George Adam Bright (Brecht), my shoe caught on something. Looking closer I discovered what appeared to be a footstone for George's grave. It was photographed just as I found it.



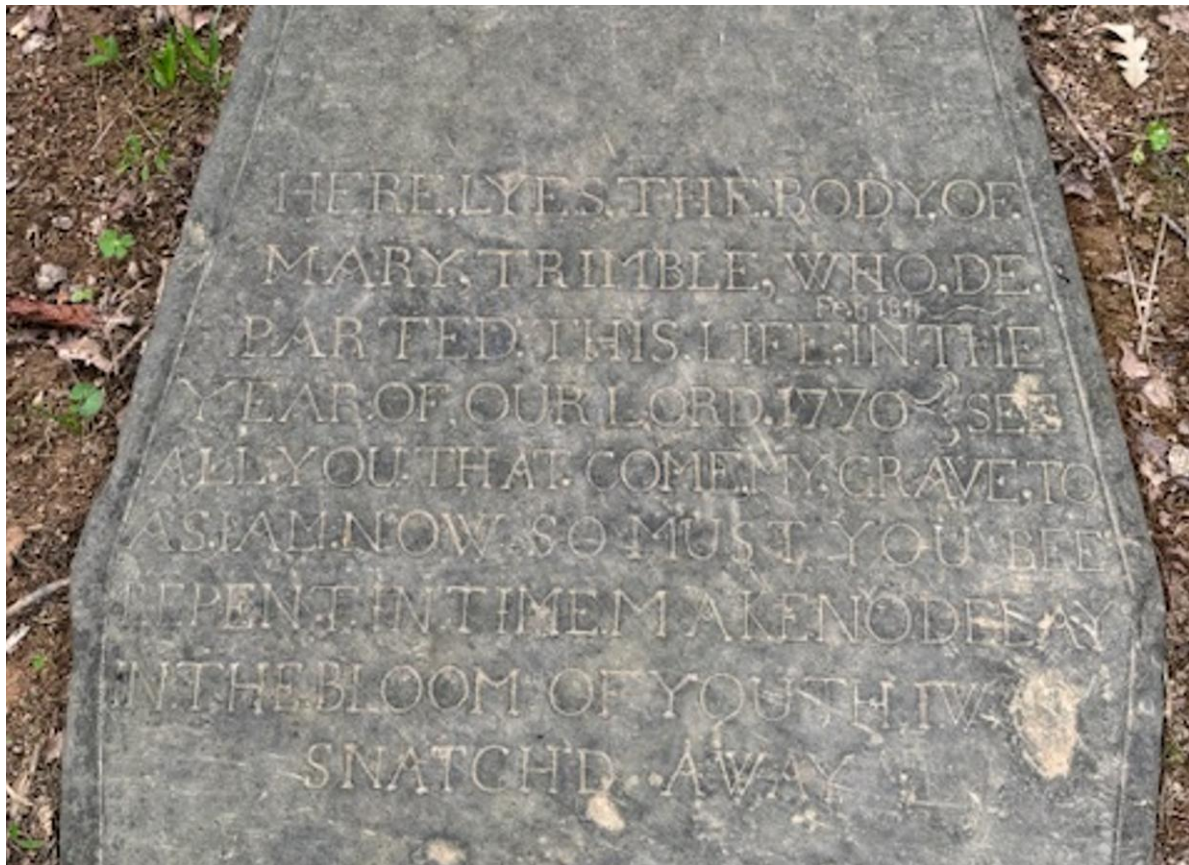
I returned later with the appropriate tools and unearthed the footstone, raised it to its original height above the ground and reset it. We can count that as yet another improvement to Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery and one stone closer to its original condition. The photo to the right is of the newly discovered footstone partially unearthed. The dry area at the top is all that was visible above the surface. The last photo is the same stone reset. It appears sedimentary and therefore I hesitate to use any cleaner on it including D-2 Biological Solution. We'll just wait for the rain.



News From The Glebe

Work is ongoing at The Glebe under the guidance of General Ted Shuey. Much has been accomplished and there is much left to do. While all of the Ewing Stones have been repaired and all but two reset, work in what Ted refers to as the McCutcheon Section is just getting under way. While the photo below of that section displays what most would describe as a disaster, it actually looks better than it did when we started! With GPR being completed, it is just a matter of unearthing the stones, repairing them as best we can and resetting them in their proper location.

One of two such stones at The Glebe, the ledger stone below, as the name implies, covers the entire grave of Mary Trimble. The photo on the following page is offered as a reference for the respective grave locations mentioned.



The Ewing Section.
Burial dates range from
the mid-1700s to the
very early 1800s.

Mary Trimble's
grave and ledger
stone. 1770

The McCutcheon
Section. 1700s



And to close out this issue of The Headstone newsletter, I have attached a photo of the DAR plaque affixed at The Glebe. Important to remember during this 250th anniversary of our country. Worth remembering every day.



Augusta County Genealogical Society Planned Programs



Time & Location

Sep 16, 2026, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Augusta County Library-Lower Level Room,
1759 Jefferson Hwy, Fishersville, VA 22939

About the event "The Daughters of the King
(Louis XIV)", presented by Cynthia Todd,
ACGS Member

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

<u>Some of the Website Records</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Added Since August 1st</u>
Death Records	1383	97
Burial Records	212	0
Marriage Records	314	38
Miscellaneous Documents, & Photos	1,344	2
Schoolhouses	266	2
Ship Passenger Lists	20	1
Auctions & Estate Settlements	24	7
Chancery Suits	20	7

Until next month, Blessings, Happy Fall, and Happy Trails,

Glenn Hanger

President, Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery