THE HEADSTONE

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Greetings All!

I do hope fall has thus far progressed to your liking in all you have been involved with during this season. Before you know it, it will be time to pluck the turkey. Or swing by the grocery store depending on your circumstances.

Typing this reminds me of when our son Adam was about eight years old. He wanted to raise a few turkeys for folks to buy for Thanksgiving. We calculated the growing time for turkeys and got if I recall, eight or ten turkey chicks. Our plan was to butcher them the week of Thanksgiving and call the people who had placed orders with Adam. As time got closer we were both concerned that the turkeys were not as big as customers might expect so we increased the feed supply and the crude protein to hopefully allow them to reach the proper size. It's funny how you don't notice how big a turkey is getting when you are around it every day. When it came time to slaughter the birds, one of the smaller ones weighed 38 pounds dressed and ready for the oven! Some folks had to go back home and get bigger coolers. Others we found out later had to cut their turkeys in half to get them into their cooking pans and pots. And the cooking time chart for those size birds has never been printed! Odd how thanksgiving can anger some folks because I think we did stir the darker emotions of several otherwise great people. At least it gave them something other than politics to be mad about at the big meal. Adam doesn't raise turkeys anymore.

New Life Members



Our newest life members, Dennis and Rachel Lotts, don't live very close to Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery. They live in East Wenatchee, Washington! Yet in November, November 11, 2025, to be exact, Dennis and Rachel took time out of their already-made travel plans to Virginia to visit Dutch Hollow. Why, you ask? Because Dennis has ancestors in Dutch Hollow that are some of the oldest burials known to be there. Dennis's lineage dates back to George Lotts (and beyond) who was interred in Dutch Hollow in 1845. That is not really all that early, but George lived to be 103! He was born in 1742 and as early as 1791 he owned land in Augusta County. Not just anywhere in Augusta County but adjacent to the farm that the cemetery is on.

When my 4g grandfather, John Hanger Sr., purchased the "cemetery farm" in 1809, that made he and George neighbors. And while the Hangers and the Lotts families no longer live across from each other, the two families continue to remain "neighbors." I guess that moniker could now be applied to Dennis and Rachel as well. And I am not referring to them as neighbors just because they visited the cemetery in 2025 or became life members in 2026. The fact is, Rachel is a tireless researcher. She has provided pages of research documentation of the Lotts family as well as the Hangers and a number of other surnames associated with Dutch Hollow. And it is always backed up by documentation. She has politely pointed out numerous errors I have made in my research, and she is just as quick to welcome others to point out her mistakes - which she rarely makes I might add.

Rachel and I shared over two hundred emails in February and March of 2026 doing research, correcting names, dates, places, all the things' researchers tend to incorrectly record in the world of genealogy. That coincided with the construction of the new website so it was great to have Rachel looking at data that would eventually be uploaded for the world to see.

Summertime brought long days and longer chore lists for both of us, (and probably most of you reading this) so the genealogy work went on hold and thus the emails slowed to a trickle. Then, the first of part of October and out of the blue I got a notice from the website that they had joined the cemetery membership and had chosen life membership. I'll stop right here and say Thank you Dennis and Rachel. Your assistance and monetary support are so needed and appreciated. We welcome you both as members but to be truthful, you sort of felt like members all along.

Estaline Chapel

Being involved in cemetery preservation it is natural that I run across like-minded folks on a regular basis. Once such couple, Denver and Debra Swisher, were no exception. Debra and I began conversing by email several years ago and we have continued to stay in touch ever since. Debra and Denver have ancestors buried at what used to be known as Estaline Valley Presbyterian Church. It is in the western part of Augusta County just on the other side of Little North Mountain from Dutch Hollow. While it takes 45 minutes to get there driving from Dutch Hollow it is only about 6 miles as the crow flies, but they did not build a road where the crow flies.

Estaline Chapel closed its doors some years ago and remained abandoned, cemetery and all, until it became available for purchase. That's when Deb and Denver took the opportunity to do what any good Cemeterian would do if able, they bought it. Last year they contracted with Len Strozier to deploy GPR in one section of cemetery. They also restored the chapel. Not for a business or residence. They restored the chapel AS A CHAPEL in what appears to be its original form, and what a beautiful job they did. I say that because I and about 35 other folks had an opportunity to worship there on October 11th. Len Strozier, a semi-retired Baptist Preacher, in addition to completing the GPR work there, offered a sermon for us Cemeterians and others which was equally relevant to all who heard it.

While I am not sure Len gave the sermon a title, I will. Holy Ground. Len talked about the significance of Holy Ground in the biblical context but also shared what he sees as Holy Ground from a human point of view. I took it as a place where we, through various emotions, like Moses with the burning bush or just a cemetery where we weep as we say goodbye to a loved

one, feel the significance of that very place. It was that kind of sermon. Just plain fitting for folks that have tried to fix up, tend to, and take care of the final resting places of those we love, and those we never knew.

Hats off to Deb and Denver for the work they have done at Estaline Chapel and to Len for preaching the word that rainy Sabbath morning. The picture below is the invitation that Deb sent out and while it is not a picture of Estaline Chapel, it is a picture of a church that looks an awful lot like Estaline Chapel. The leaves were starting to turn at Estaline just like in the picture.



Len GPR surveyed a number of other sites in and around Augusta County while here including a Civil War battlefield burial site (Cross Keys) in Rockingham County and a 1700s chapel and graveyard in Rockbridge County (Haines Chapel) containing mountain folk from the Blue Ridge Mountains. He arrived on September 30th and did not head back home until October 15th! I plan to share more success stories based on Len's most recent work in upcoming issues of *The Headstone,* including Cook – Teaford Cemetery, where many of us have ancestor relatives.

Fall Has Come to Dutch Hollow

If you read any of this year's newsletters surely you concluded that it has been dry in Virginia and really dry in Dutch Hollow. The final numbers are in for time spent on lawn care during 2026 at the cemetery:

Last season I spent five hours picking up walnuts in the cemetery and hauling them away. This year – zero hours. The Memorial week freeze did them in. Last year I spent 76 hours weed eating and mowing. This year – 35.75. A result of the drought. A tough year for farmers for sure. Below is a photo of the cemetery taken on October 25th. I think it has been readied for winter. A late year for foliage change here I might add. Some trees are bare and others are still green.



Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery on a beautiful October 25, 2026, afternoon

Yet even with the drought nature still endeavors to persevere. Below are several photos of a wildflower patch that Jeff and Karen Pletcher put out this summer. Even with no rain, the beauty is there. We did not think any of the seeds would sprout but sprout they did! Maybe not as prolifically as hoped for, but beautiful nonetheless. Here it is almost November, and many are still hanging on. Have I ever mentioned that Jeff and Karen are the greatest neighbors you could ever ask for? Fact is, all our neighbors are the greatest you could ever ask for. We look out for each other and lend a hand when needed. I could not ask for more.











The Zinnias are even producing buds for new flowers, albeit a little too late. We had frost every morning the week of October 18th and more to come, yet these flowers don't show it yet.



Time & Location

Nov 18, 2026, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM
Tinkling Spring Presbyterian Church, 30 Tinkling Spring Dr, Fishersville, VA 22939, USA

About the event

Provided: Fried Chicken, Pulled Pork BBQ, and Beverages
Please bring: Dish to Share and Vintage Christmas Tablecloths to use
RSVP by Friday, November 13th to Billie Quigley
(757) 749-2504 or bquigley949@gmail.com

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

Dennis & Rachel Lotts 2026

Some of the Website Records	Total	Added Since October 1st
Death Records	**1393**	**10**
Burial Records	**212**	**0**
Marriage Records	**314**	**0**
Miscellaneous Documents, & Photos	**1,350**	**6**
Schoolhouses	**266**	**0**
Ship Passenger Lists	**20**	**0**
Auctions & Estate Settlements	**24**	**0**
Chancery Suits	**20**	**0**
Old Providence (New Cemetery) Records	**1201**	**0**

A short newsletter this month but hopefully worth reading.

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

Glenn Hanger

President, Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery