



Some Notes on the Spotswood Family's Tubal Works and Its Cherub's Head Motif

Ann L. Miller

The spring 2013 Orange County Historical Society *Record* contained a short article on the partial cast-iron fireback in the Society's collection. Dated 1758, this fireback is attributed to the Spotswood family's Tubal iron works because of its cast cherub's head motif. As promised, we are presenting additional information on the Tubal works and its known products.

The Tubal Iron Works

The Tubal iron works was established in the 1710s as part of Lt. Governor Alexander Spotswood's development of the region. Spotswood's holdings would eventually include over 80,000 acres in this region. These comprised his plantation complex around Germanna, agricultural lands along both sides of the Rapidan River in present day Orange and Culpeper counties, and his iron and shipping operations stretching into Spotsylvania. The Tubal works was located at Pipe Dam Run, some thirteen miles southeast of Germanna. To ship his iron products, Spotswood also had wharves at Massaponax, where he built an air furnace (double foundry) around 1732.

Interested in setting up his own iron operation, William Byrd II visited Alexander Spotswood at Germanna in 1732. In his *Progress to the Mines*, Byrd described both the Germanna property and the iron operations noting

[September 28, 1732]...Then I inquired after his [Spotswood's] own mines, and hoped, as he was the first that engaged in this great undertaking, that he had brought things to the most perfection. He told me that he had iron in several parts of his great tract of land, consisting of 45,000 acres. But that the mine he was at work upon was 13 miles below Germanna. That his ore (which was very rich) he raised a mile from his furnace, and was obliged to cart the iron, when it was made, fifteen miles to Massaponax, a plantation he had upon Rappahannock River; but that the road was exceeding good, gently declining all the way, and had no more than one hill to go in the whole journey. For this reason his loaded carts went it in a day with-



Remnants of the Tubal Works. Photo courtesy of Bernice Walker.

out difficulty. He said it was true his works were of the oldest standing; but that his long absence in England, and the wretched management of Mr. Greame, whom he had entrusted with his affairs, had put him back very much. That, what with neglect and severity, above eighty of his slaves were lost while he was in England, and most of his cattle starved. That his furnace stood still a great part of the time, and all his plantations ran to ruin. That indeed he was rightly served for committing his affairs to the care of a mathematician, whose thoughts were always among the stars. That nevertheless, since his return, he had applied himself to rectify his steward's mistakes, and bring his business again into order.

That now he had contrived to do everything with his own people, except raising the mine and running the iron, buy which he had contracted his expense very much. Nay, he believed that by his directions he could bring sensible negroes to perform those parts of the works tolerably well. But at the same time he gave me to understand that his furnace had done no great feats lately, because he had been taken up in building an air furnace at Massaponax, which he had now brought to perfection, and should be able to furnish the whole country with all sorts of cast iron, as cheap and as good as ever came from England. I told him that he must do one thing more to have a full vent for those commodities—he must keep a shallop running into all the rivers, to carry his wares home to people's own

See Tubal on page 2.

Tubal (*continued*)

doors. And if he would do that, I would set a good example, and take off a whole ton of them.

[October 2, 1732]. . . We drove over a fine road to the mines, which lie thirteen measured miles from the Germanna, each mile being marked distinctly upon the trees. The Colonel has a great deal of land in his mine tract exceedingly barren, and the growth of trees upon it is hardly big enough for coaling [i.e. for making charcoal to fuel the iron operations]. However, the treasure under ground makes amends, and renders it worthy to be his lady's jointure. We lighted at the mines, which are a mile nearer Germanna than the furnace. They raise abundance of ore there, great part of which is very rich. . . All the land hereabouts seems paved with iron ore; so that there seems to be enough to feed a furnace for many ages. From hence we proceeded to the furnace, which is built of rough stone, having been the first of that kind erected in the country. It had not blown for several moons, the Colonel having taken off great part of his people to carry on his air furnace at Massaponax. Here the wheel that carried the bellows was no more than twenty feet diameter; but was an overshot wheel that went with little water. This was necessary here, because water is something scarce, notwithstanding it is supplied by two streams, one of which is conveyed 1900 feet through wooden pipes, and the other 60. The name of the founder employed at present is one Godfrey, of the kingdom of Ireland, whose wages is three shillings and six-pence per ton for all the iron he runs, and his provisions.¹

In the late eighteenth century, Alexander Spotswood, grandson of the colonial Lt. Governor, was attempting to sell the Tubal works. In 1792 he advertised

FOR SALE: From 13,000 to 18,000 acres of LAND, known by the name of SPOTSWOOD'S IRON-MINE, lying about 12 miles above the town of Fredericksburg, whereon were very profitable IRON WORKS, known by the name of the TUBAL-WORKS, which run annually from 600 to 750 tons of Pig-Iron; but from bad management was suffered to go to decay, and put down in my minority.

There is of this land 3000 acres, which contain the ore, and that of the very best quality, and an inexhaustible supply of it—the woodland, which was formerly cut down, is now in fine order for cutting and coaling—the ore banks are from 1 to 3 miles from the Furnace—the streams that work the Furnace are good, and two in number, which, after working the Furnace, washes the

ore, and then falls into the mill pond—the seat for the mill is superior to most that ever I saw—the country is healthy, a fine range for cattle, and any quantity of wheat may be purchased for manufacturing—the land in general is good for farming—the Furnace is situated exactly 11 miles from Fredericksburg, a plain level road thereto, having but one hill to go up, and that but a very small one—the distance by water is only 13 miles, and for about fifteen hundred pounds the river may be made navigable, from whence the Furnace stands only half a mile. At the time the Furnace was put down, she was run[n]ing 350 tons per blast; this iron, in time of peace, sold in Europe for ten shillings sterling per ton more than any other iron shipped from the Continent, and in time of war thirty shillings per ton more. The terms will be made easy to the purchaser. —Letters addressed to me, at Nottingham, near Fredericksburg, to the care of Mr. Fontaine Maury, merchant, will be duly answered. I am informed a company is forming to make the river navigable for many miles above the place where the Furnace must be fixed.

July 12, 1792 ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD²

A slightly later advertisement, dated 12 October 1803, stated that W. B. Wallace of Stafford County had

. . . authority to sell two Valuable leases, one about 300 acres, and the other adjoining 280, ten miles above Fredericksburg on the Rappahannock river at the seat of Tubal Iron Works; these are each for two lives,³ and include about 100 acres of fertile River bottom.⁴

The Tubal iron works continued in operation until ca. 1861. The stone work of the blast furnace remained in good condition well into the twentieth century. Subsequently, though, construction in the area and salvaging of the stonework removed most above-ground traces of the furnace, although the below-ground stonework for the air-cooling tunnel is still partly intact. The site is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Tubal Products and the Cherub's Head Motif

The identifying mark of the Tubal works (and possibly the other related Spotswood iron operations as well) appears to have been the cherub's head motif, similar to that seen on

² *The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, 21 August 1792, 3, col. 3.

³ A "lease for lives" was a common eighteenth-century form of lease (and one much used by the Spotswood family), in which the term of a land lease was granted for the lifetime of one or more of the leases. It is interesting to see it being used here in the first decade of the nineteenth century, relatively late for a lease of this sort.

⁴ (Fredericksburg) *Virginia Herald*, 3 January 1804, 3, col. 4.

¹ The Germanna and ironworking-related sections of *Progress to the Mines* were included as Chapter XI in W.W. Scott's *A History of Orange County Virginia* (Richmond, Va.: Everett Waddey Co., 1907), 87–97.

Tubal (*continued*)

the fireback owned by the Orange County Historical Society. Research done in the 1980s by Brad Rauschenberg of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA) identified a number of iron artifacts bearing the cherub's head motif, and therefore attributable to the Tubal works. The artifacts identified by Dr. Rauschenberg are

- A fireback dated 1725, square with a narrow molded rim. The fireback has the cast initials "M P" in the top center, flanked by stars and then cherub's heads in each upper corner. The cast date 1725, flanked by stars, is immediately below. This fireback was possibly cast for Mann Page I, whose plantation house at his Rosewell plantation was under construction after 1721 (see MESDA's newsletter, *The Luminary*, Summer 1988, p. 5). This fireback is now in the MESDA collections.

- A fireback dated 1745, with angled top corners and a cast molded rim. The date 1745 is at top center; there are flanking cherub's heads slightly below the date. This fireback is located in the nursery room at Stratford Hall, the home of the Lee family in Westmoreland County.

- An andiron for a fireplace, with the cherub's head case on the front of the item.

- A "pig" of iron (the initial iron production that would be recast into the desired items); this item, which measures forty-one inches long with an average width of six inches, has no cherub's head (that would come with the subsequent casting), but does have the identifying cast identification and date description "TUBAL 1758 WORKS." (A similar iron "pig" with the cast notation "TUBAL 1733 WORKS" is illustrated in Ralph C. Meima's 1993 monograph *Spotswood's Iron*.⁵)

- The best-known local example of an iron artifact bearing the Tubal cherub's head probably is the cast iron grave marker of John Spotswood, son of Lt. Governor Alexander Spotswood. (John Spotswood was originally buried in Spotsylvania County; in the twentieth century the area became the site of a sand and gravel company, and the Spotswood burial vault was discovered during excavation.) This marker is a cast iron lintel, with cherub's heads flanking the cast text "JOHN SPOTSWOOD ESQ. AGED 34 YEARS DIED AUGT. YE 26 1758." Originally over the door to the Spotswood vault, and subsequently set up on concrete supports to mark the site, the marker remained sentinel over the Spotswood vault until July 2002, when John Spotswood's body was reburied at the Germanna Foundation's Visitor Center in Orange County. John Spotswood's new burial site is marked with a black granite marker. For protection and preservation purposes, the original marker, which now is in the possession of the Germanna Foundation, is in curatorial storage and is no longer exposed to the elements.

Other Probable Examples of Firebacks from the Tubal or Massaponax Works

Several more elaborate examples of iron casting, probably made at the Tubal or Massaponax works, but lacking the cherub's head motif, are also known to exist.

The intact, elaborate fireback found at the Enchanted Castle archaeological site at Germanna in the 1980s, and now owned by the Virginia Historical Society, has a semi-circular top, richly ornamented with cast flowers and fruits. At the top of an inner panel, cast drapery is drawn back to frame a pedestal and bust of a female figure wearing a crown or similar headdress (the figure resembles the "Indian Queen" crest of the Virginia Colony). Other fragments found at the Germanna site appear to be portions of similar or identical firebacks. The Germanna "Indian Queen" fireback appears identical to a partial fireback found at the President's House at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg.

This sort of elaborate fireback apparently had a prior history in England and part of the Continent. A similar fireback, dated to the seventeenth century and described as an English casting from a Dutch model, is in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum. This fireback, like the "Indian Queen" firebacks, has a semi-circular top, extensive cast flower and fruit ornamentation, and cast drapery framing an inner panel (which in this example shows a female figure dressed in classical robes and riding a chariot across an arched bridge).⁶

Another fireback with a Spotswood history, and possibly of similar design, was owned by Spotswood descendants and remained in family residences in eastern Orange County until ca. 1931, when it was stolen.

A 1931 article in the *Orange County News* noted the history and fate of the fireback and the discovery of the grave of John Spotswood. The article mistakenly placed the iron mines at Germanna, but otherwise appears to be fairly accurate:

Ancient Spotswood Fireback Is Stolen

Piece Cast from Iron Mined at Germanna More Than 200 Years Ago

After nearly two centuries of quiet disturbing things began to happen in the Spotswood family, descendants of Governor Alexander Spotswood, famous Colonial head of the State of Virginia and leader of the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe.

Only recently a steam-shovel, operating on the New Post farm, once home of the Spotswood family, dug into the long-hidden grave of Col. John

⁵ See Ralph C. Meima, *Spotswood's Iron: The Story of the Birth of the Industrial Revolution in the New World* (Fredericksburg, Va.: the author, 1993); cover illustration and p. 32.

⁶ This fireback is pictured in Herbert Schiffer, *Antique Iron: Survey of American and English Forms; Fifteenth through Nineteenth Centuries* (Exton, Pa: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1979), 150.

Tubal (*continued*)

Spotswood, son of Alexander Spotswood and exposed the bones of the deceased to light after 173 years of undisturbed rest.

The excitement had hardly died down before it became known through Mrs. Leila Spotswood Willis, of Culpeper, that a handsome old iron fireback, cast especially for Governor Spotswood by his workmen from iron mined in the Spotswood mines at Germanna, had been stolen from "Orange Grove," originally the home of Governor Spotswood's grandson, near Wilderness.

May Have Been in Big House

The fireback, which is of unique design and of great size, was made in the iron furnaces established by Governor Spotswood, whom Col. William Byrd called "The Tubal Cain of Virginia" because of his work with iron and who possessed many iron mines on his tract of forty-five thousand acres of land, and it is probable that it was first in the historic "Germannan [sic] House," the enchanted castle of Governor Spotswood, built on a bluff overlooking the Rapidan River and destroyed by fire more than a hundred and seventy years ago.

Certain it is that it was in the mansion house at "Orange Grove," the home of the Governor's grandson Captain John Spotswood, of Revolutionary fame, and that it remained there through successive generations until some years ago, when this house was burned. The

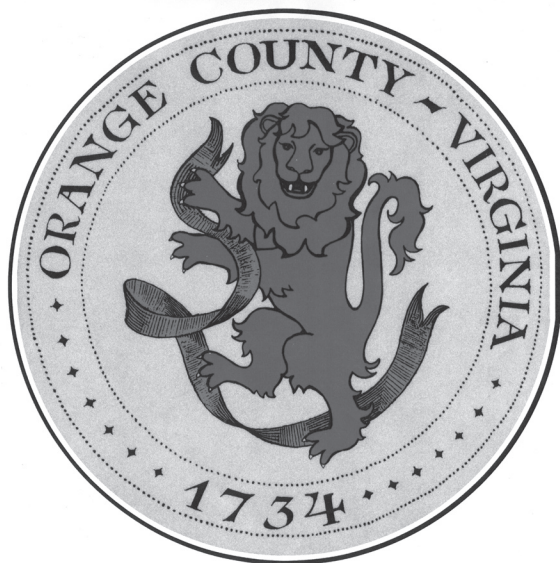
fireback was then removed from the tall chimney left standing above the ruins of the mansion and placed in the capacious fireplace of a cottage on the grounds which, after several rooms had been added, was fitted up as a residence and used by the Spotswoods in the hard years following the War Between the States.

The fireback, according to the description given by Mrs. Willis, shaped into a point at the top and was ornamented with a design of curtains drawn back. Lower, within an oval can be seen the remains of what was evidently a coat of arms, but two hundred years of fires have partly obliterated this design, and a crack crosses obliquely from one side to the other.

This interesting relic was not taken to Culpeper when Mrs. Willis removed to that place as it was too massive to be fitted into the fireplace of a modern home, and it was thought to be safeguarded by nailing stout boards across the fireplace which contained it and by locking the house. Lately considering her inability to make use of it herself, Mrs. Willis decided to accept an offer to purchase it, and when she visited "Orange Grove" to attend to this matter it was to find that the house had been entered and robbed of its principal treasure.⁷

⁷ "Ancient Spotswood Fireback is Stolen," *Orange County News*, 27 August 1931, 8.

The Orange County Seal



The Orange County Court on July 28, 1774 ordered the Sheriff to pay fifty shillings for a county seal. This seal, according to W.W. Scott, Orange County historian, consisted of "an excellent cut of a lion, encircled by the name of the County."

It was in late July 1774 also that delegates from Virginia's counties were about to elect the colony's delegates to the First Continental Congress. Feeling against England was high, and the First Congress had been called to decide what should be done to defend the rights of American colonies. The choice of a lion as the device for the seal, therefore, was appropriately symbolic and in keeping with the spirit of the times, for in heraldry a lion rampant, or rearing up, signifies angry defiance.

The colors of the seal are those appertaining to the coat of arms of "The Honorable Alexander Spotswood Esqr., Her Majesty's Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief of Virginia," as his commission read, and the principal figure in the early history of what became Orange County in 1734.

The Orange County Bicentennial Commission engaged Miss Jean Lowe of Orange to design and execute a conjectural rendering of the seal

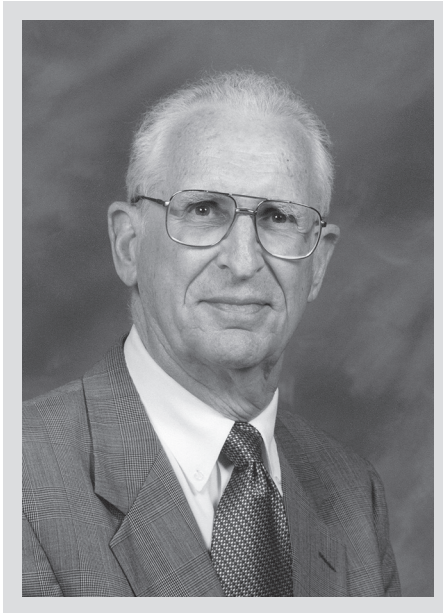
in color. On March 11, 1975 the Orange County Board of Supervisors adopted the seal as the official seal, and the colors as the official colors of Orange County, Virginia.

In Memoriam: Atwell W. Somerville, 1921–2014

Ann L. Miller

With the passing of Atwell Somerville on February 23, our Society lost one of its longest-standing friends and supporters. Atwell was a charter member, a veteran of numerous committees and projects, former Board member (including several terms as president), and was the registered agent for the Society for thirty years.

In fact, his involvement in the Society went back to the time before there was a Society. As noted in the *Orange Review* for 11 November 1965, Atwell opened the initial public meeting held to examine the feasibility of establishing an historical society in Orange County. Under the headline “Interested ‘Historians’ Discuss Possibility of County Society,” the paper announced that



Formation of an Orange County Historical Society was discussed at a meeting at the Orange County Public Library Tuesday night. Atwell W. Somerville opened the session by noting that there had always been interest in County history but that it has been largely on the part of individuals. . . . He said, however, that there now was a feeling that an historical society might be an effective way to encourage efforts of persons in

the community with interests in various aspects of County history.”

(The Society was formally established a month later, and was subsequently incorporated.)

From November 1975 to January 1976, Atwell served as the chair of the Planning Committee, which issued a thoughtful and detailed report in January 1976—“to determine the future activities of the Society and the characteristics of the building or buildings required to permit their development.” The report established the need and requirements for a permanent home for the Society, and Atwell was closely involved in the development of the Society’s Research Center, which was completed in the fall of 1977.

Atwell supplemented his considerable committee work with an election to membership on the Society’s Board of Directors in 1979. A year later, he was instrumental in convincing the Board of the need to start acquiring staff for the Society (I was the first, in February 1980). The next two decades saw Atwell’s frequent service on the Board (including a number of terms as president).

See Somerville on page 6.

Letter of Gift of Law Books in 1947, the Year Nottingham & Somerville was Formed

[Note: The document transcribed below was a gift to the Historical Society from Atwell Somerville’s estate. It was typed in Courier font on an evidently badly worn typewriter, making it very difficult to read.]

W. Howard Lane, Esq.

[with will annexed] of the estate of Justice George L. Browning,
Orange, Virginia

WE, the undersigned, A. Willis Browning, George Landon Browning, Jr., and Francis H. H. Browning, residuary legatees under the will of their father, Justice George Landon Browning, hereby recognize a gift made by their father, the said Justice George L. Browning in his lifetime to Severn Nottingham, Jr., of his interest in the office furniture and law library of the old firm of Browning and Nottingham, and do hereby ratify and confirm said gift; and in consideration of the services of S. M. Nottingham as legal advisor to the personal representative of the estate of Justice George L. Browning, we do hereby devise and transfer to S. M. Nottingham of the old firm of Browning and Nottingham, any law books owned by the said Justice George L. Browning, accumulated since his gift to his said son, Severn Nottingham, Jr.

Given under our hands and seals this the 25th day of August, 1947.

Executed in duplicate.

(Signature of A. Willis Browning)

(Signature of George L. Browning, Jr.)

(Signature of Francis H. H. Browning)

[Note: The “Justice” prefix to the name of the senior Browning reflects the fact that he had been a member of the Supreme Court of Virginia. The “Landon” surname appearing as his middle name is reflected in the naming of Landon Lane in the Town of Orange. Severn Marcellus Nottingham, Jr., had been killed in November 1942 in one of the WWII naval battles leading to the capture of Guadalcanal in the Pacific. In 1947 Atwell Wilson Somerville, also a veteran of Pacific fighting (Army Air Corps), graduated from the Law School of the University of Virginia and joined the senior Mr. Nottingham in the new firm of Nottingham & Somerville.]

Somerville (*continued*)

Atwell preferred to work quietly, gathering and analyzing information, having well-informed discussions, and building consensus, all without self-promotion or extensive publicity. To give just a few examples: He was (along with J. Randolph Grymes Jr.) one of the leading early advocates of the preservation and exploration of the site of the Enchanted Castle and related archaeological sites at Germanna. Atwell also arranged the donation of the majority of the printing costs (including then-expensive photographs) for the publication of *Antebellum Orange*, as well as financial backing for a number of the Society's other publications. He helped organize the public meetings and cooperation between county and state that ensured the success of the Madison-Barbour Historic District (with the Society acting as county liaison).

Atwell's historical interests did not stop with general county history. Among his wide-ranging interests, he was the first chair of the Montpelier Property Council, he did consid-

erable research into his family genealogy and the history of the Orange Presbyterian Church, and he helped preserve the history of his WWII unit, the 90th Bomb Group (the "Jolly Rogers") of the Army Air Corps.

In 2004, the Society presented Atwell with a resolution and an Honorary Life Membership, recognizing his many years of hard work and support for the Society's mission. In presenting the award, then-Secretary Frank Walker stated that Atwell should receive "the public acclamation and gratitude due to one whose work has brought honor to himself and to all who have been associated with him."

Never one to rest on his laurels, Atwell remained an active member of the Society until the end of his life. Whenever I saw him, his greeting never varied. First, "Ann, how are you doing?" followed by "How is our Society doing?"

He will be greatly missed.

An Update on the Railfan Tour

Members who attended the July picnic meeting at the Orange Train Station/Visitors Center were treated to a presentation by Frank Walker on the county's railroads, past and present. The facts and stories Frank related came out of the research he is doing to create a self-guiding Railfan Tour of Orange County. When completed, it will be donated to the county Department of Tourism. It will thus join the late Paul Slayton's "A Walking Tour of Orange" and Phil Audibert's "All Four Years" as tours created for the county by Society members. Since that July meeting, Frank has continued to work on the tour, and the following is an update on where things presently stand.

A few weeks ago, Frank completed his first draft of the tour manuscript. It features a presentation of the sites in the vicinity of the train station, followed by four tours out into the

county, three of which follow historic rights of way being used by modern railroads today. The route of the 1854 Orange & Alexandria is traced to Gordonsville, where CSX, the successor to the 1840 Louisa Railroad operates a "Wye" junction of three main lines. The tourist is then directed to Barboursville to follow the route of the 1880 Charlottesville & Rapidan to Orange. At Orange, the abandoned right of way of the Potomac, Fredericksburg & Piedmont is picked up and traced east as far as Unionville. Next, there is a cross-county hop to Rapidan to pick up the northern leg of the Orange & Alexandria and follow it back to Orange. Evidence in the county of a fifth right of way, that of the Rapidan Railroad Company, is almost nonexistent, but the story of that railroad's brief existence is told.

With the assistance of members Bob Johnson and Paul Alderman, subsequently abetted by member Bob Lookabill, Frank field-checked the draft for accuracy and ease of use. He won't say it's a finished product, but he thinks we're close. The tour manuscript will now be given to Sharon Elswick, the person who originally suggested a Railfan Tour, and she will give it its first field test. After any questions or concerns raised by Sharon are dealt with, the manuscript will be field tested by a small committee of nonresident railfans. If that test goes well, the manuscript will be turned over to the county, along with suggestions of illustrations for the tour booklet that will be published.

Since both the county budgeting and the publishing processes are likely to take time, Frank will see if finished draft copies of the manuscript can be made available in the interim. Also, at some point downloadable versions of the Audibert, Slayton, and Walker tours will become available online, as the Department of Tourism continues to develop the tourism sector of the county's economy.



Buckingham Branch #2 on the Berry Hill Road Overpass, Orange VA, by Todd Brown.

LOW Civil War Study Group Dedicates Memorial

Frank S. Walker, Jr.

On 8 May 2014, in conjunction with the Sesquicentennial observance of the May 1864 Battle of the Wilderness, the Lake of the Woods Civil War Study Group dedicated a memorial to the soldiers, Union and Confederate, who fell in that battle and whose remains were never recovered. The particular focus of the group is the wooded area between the north edge of Saunders Field and the Lake of the Woods property boundary. Those woods became the scene of repeated intense and deadly clashes. At the same time, however, the group recognizes that the rest of the battle's combat areas also became final, permanent resting places for additional brave souls.

Snaking through that section of woods in eastern Orange County was a narrow road known as the Ridge Road or the Culpeper Mine Ford Road. With the dense, and in places impenetrable, Wilderness pressing in on both sides, the road was a shortcut of doubtful value between the Germanna Plank Road (today's Route 3) and the Orange Turnpike (today's Route 20). During the afternoon of 5 May 1864, members of the Union VI Corps forced their way west along that road in a doomed effort to provide flank support for an attack launched by the V Corps in adjacent Saunders Field. The men did not discover that Confederate earthworks had been erected across their path until they were literally upon them. The woods exploded in musketry and a day-and-a-half harvest of death began.

For as long as men thought they could see something in the direction of the enemy, sharp skirmishing and deadly sniping filled the minutes between the attacks launched and repulsed in the fire, smoke, and confusion of this Virginia jungle. It was not until well after dark on 6 May that the last muzzle flashes sputtered out and the sounds of whippoorwills and the calls of soldiers seeking fallen comrades finally became the dominant sounds.

On 7 May, there was only desultory skirmishing as the armies sought to gather in their wounded, then bury their dead.

Before dark, however, the move to Spotsylvania Court House was underway. Some dead were left buried in poorly-marked graves in remote locations, and many had to be left where they fell. In later months and years, efforts were made to locate and transfer these unfortunates to cemeteries, but estimates are that the remains of over a thousand men are now a part of the dust of that forest floor.

Located between the edge of the Lake of the Woods Church parking lot and the National Park Service boundary along the woods, the memorial's principal features are two stone plaques set between four boundary markers. One plaque is Pennsylvania bluestone; the other Georgia gray granite.

The bluestone plaque reads, "DEDICATED TO THE FALLEN, We honor Those Who Remained in these Woods Long After the Battle Had Ended May 7, 1864," with the accompanying quote, "Hundreds of graves on these battlefields are without marks whatever to distinguish them, and so covered with foliage that the visitor will be unable to find the last resting-place of those who have fallen." The quote is attributed to Capt. J. M. Moore, Commanding Cemeterial Branch, QMC, USA.

The granite plaque reads "FROM WILDERNESS RUN TO FLAT RUN" with the accompanying quote, "My total loss at the Wilderness was 1,250 killed and wounded. The burial parties from two divisions reported interring over 1,100 of the enemy. The third and largest made no report. When we moved probably one-third or more were still unburied of those who were within reach of our lines." The quote is attributed to Lt. Gen. R. S. Ewell, Commanding 2nd Army Corps, ANV.

The ceremony was opened with a short address by Study Group Chairman, Dr. Pete Rainey. The Reverend Adam Colson, LOW Church Youth Pastor, delivered the invocation and prayers, followed by the laying of wreaths. Fittingly, the closing gun salute was a distant cannon report from Saunders Field, and then a single bugler deep in the woods played Taps.



The Gipson Boys

Paul Carter

PFC Thomas Ellis Gipson

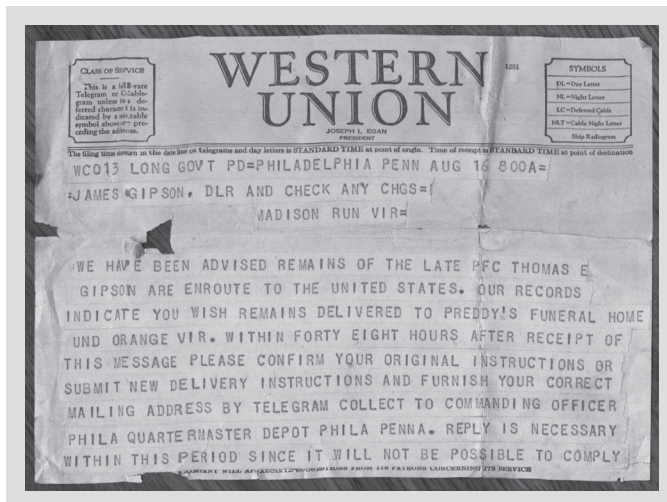
Private First Class Thomas Ellis Gipson was born 4 January 1923, to Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Gipson of Madison Run. His mother was the former Mabel Lucy Hicks. The house that he was born in is now the home of Gary Hogsten. Because of the needs of the family during the depression era, Thomas only attended grammar school before going to work for the Brockman Lumber Company, which was operated at Madison Run by Rosser Brockman. Located across Route 639 from the current Royal Concrete, with close proximity to the railroad, its main product was railroad ties.

Thomas was drafted in Charlottesville on 16 February 1943, and took basic training at Camp McCain, Mississippi. He left for overseas duty on 23 April 1944, as a member of Company G, 47th Infantry, 9th Division. He was killed in action in Cherbourg, France, on 10 August 1944. Details of his

death are not known. He was buried in a temporary cemetery in Marigny, France, which was opened on 31 July 1944 and eventually held 3,070 bodies of Allied and German soldiers.

At the time of his death he had three brothers in the service: PFC Clifton L. Gipson, somewhere in France; PFC Walter R. Gipson, Kelly Field, Texas; and Private B. F. Gipson of Camp Butner, North Carolina.

His parents were notified of his death by a telegram that came into Pages Drug Store and was delivered by Mathews Taxi. In the late forties his body was returned to Orange and buried in Graham Cemetery. A soldier, who carried his dog tags, accompanied the body to insure that the casket wasn't opened. His parents received the Purple Heart, awarded posthumously.



Mary Agnes Harlow, sister of the Gipson boys, holding Thomas's Purple Heart.

SGT Clifton Lee "Pete" Gipson

Sergeant Clifton Lee Gipson was born 24 November 1924 at Madison Run. Like his brother, he only attended grammar school and then worked on his parent's farm (now Wolfram Farm) before entering the service. Pete was drafted at Richmond on 10 March 1943 and took basic training at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. He left for overseas duty in December 1943 to become a member of a field artillery unit of the First Army. The "Fighting First Division" was originally formed in France in 1917. During WWI, this division was the first to land in France, first to suffer casualties and the first to take prisoners.

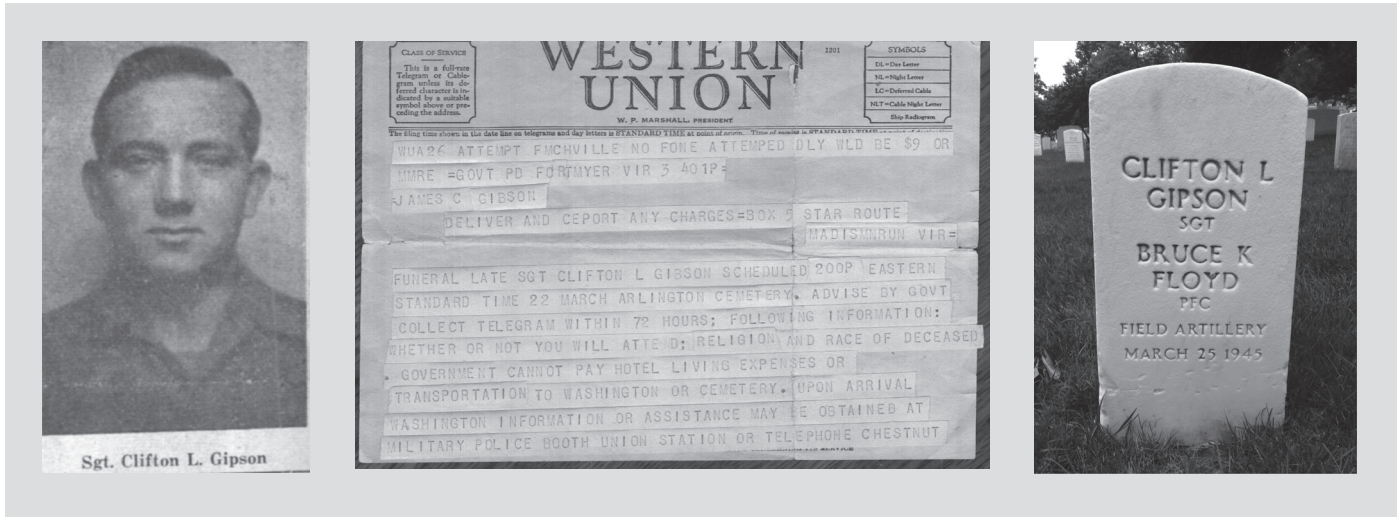
On 25 March 1945, near Geisbach, Germany, he was taking a break from the war in his tank under a tree when it was hit by a shell. His commanding officer, Captain James B. Armstrong, wrote Mrs. Gipson, "Your son was without question one of the finest men I have known in my experience in the army

or elsewhere. He gained the confidence of the men he commanded through duty. He was at all times cheerful and eager to do his part. He had many friends, not only in Company C but throughout the battalion. On behalf of all the officers and men of this company, I offer my deepest sympathy."

Details of his death were not known until after the war when one of his soldier buddies from Richmond, who witnessed the event, came to see the family here in Orange. Mrs. Gipson wrote letters to the Army pressuring them for his remains. On 22 March 1950 his remains were reinterred in Arlington National Cemetery in Section 34, Grave 4691. The parents were awarded his posthumous Purple Heart. Mrs. Mable Hicks Gipson presented flags to the American Legion and the Orange County Playground in memory of her two sons killed in the war.

See **Gipson** on page 9.

Gipson (continued)



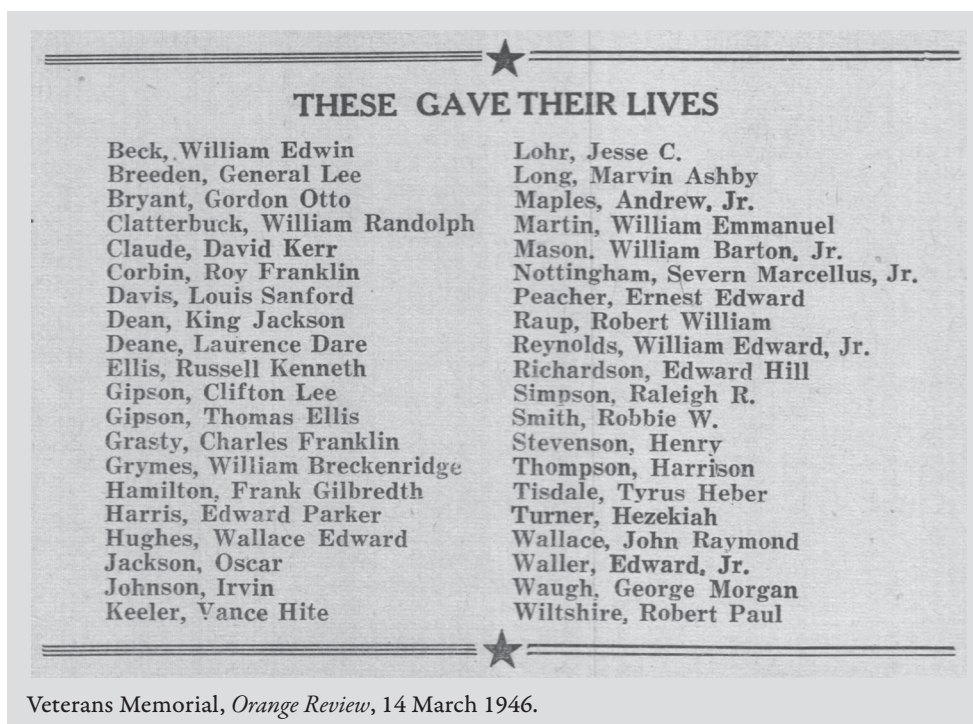
On Sunday, 11 November 1945, several thousand people turned out for a parade held to honor the men and women from the county who served in the armed services. More than fifty soldiers and sailors in uniform marched down Main Street. In attendance was Governor-elect William M. Tuck of South Boston who was the guest speaker. He was introduced by attorney Virginius R. Shackelford of Orange. The Governor spoke from the porch of the Coleman Hotel, across the street from the courthouse. On the porch also was Mrs. Gipson as Governor-elect Tuck's guest. A section of the stand was reserved for the parents and next of kin of the thirty men who lost their lives in the war.

The Orange County Honor Roll, sponsored by the Orange County American Legion Post 156, was unveiled by sisters Jane

and Mary Agnes Gipson. It listed all who served including the ones who gave the supreme sacrifice. The Junior Women's Club of Orange headed by Mrs. Courtney (Susan) McIntosh, copied the more than 1500 names provided by the selective service board and the Orange County War History Committee. Robert Brooking of Locust Grove spent considerable time painting the names on the Honor Roll.

Getting a complete list of names was very difficult and it wasn't until 14 March 1946 that a list was finalized and published in the *Orange Review*.

At some point the Honor Roll was taken down and its current whereabouts is unknown. If anyone has information about its location, please call the Historical Society at 672-5366.



Veterans Memorial, *Orange Review*, 14 March 1946.

Letter from Jonathan Lancaster Jr. to His Siblings in 1845

Transcribed by Barbara V. Little

Alabama, Sumpter County, January 15th 1845

Dear

Brothers and sisters I now take the opportunity of writing you a few lines to let you know that I am still in the land of the living and am in tolerable good health at this time. I have had about a weeks sickness so as to stop me from business since I come to Alabama and I hope when these few lines may reach you they may find you all enjoying good health as that is one of the greatest blessings that the lord can bestow upon us I have nothing of much importance to write to you at this time I am overseeing for Robbert Houston this year times is very dull here overseers wages is very much down I get two hundred and forty dollars and a horse furnished me to ride I have about twenty seven hands to attend to I started my ploughs last Friday I agreed to live with Thomas Ward and in about four weeks after we bargained he sent me word that the man that lived with him last year was a going to stay with him again this year so I was knocked out of business as I thought but the next day I happened to be in Livingston and met with Houston so he employed me at once and gives me the same that ward was to have given me and I think it a much better place to live at than wards would have been they are fine people that I am [next page]

living with I think Mrs Houston is about as fine woman as I ever was acquainted with uncle Benjamin Lancaster was very anxious for me to stay with him again this year but he could not afford to give me as much as I could get else where and his business did not suit me for he did not have hands enough I done more work last year than I ever did before in one year for grass will grow as much here in one day as it will in Virginia in a week Engram Kenard is living with uncle Benjamin which married his daughter Mary at this time uncle Benjamin and family is tolerable well at this though aunt Nancy has been in a dwindling state for some time uncle Washington Hutchingson and family was well last Sunday James and family was well a few days ago he moved about twenty five miles below where I live he is setting a farm for Col Thornton he made a tolerable good crop of cotton last year but his crop of corn was short he sold the most of his cotton for one dollar and a half per cwt in the seed cotton is very low it is only worth from three to five cents per lb corn is worth fifty cents per bushel flour is worth five dollars per barrel pork is worth from 3½ to 4 cents per pound we have had the first weather for business this winter that I ever saw we have had but very little cold weather to day is the first rainy day we have

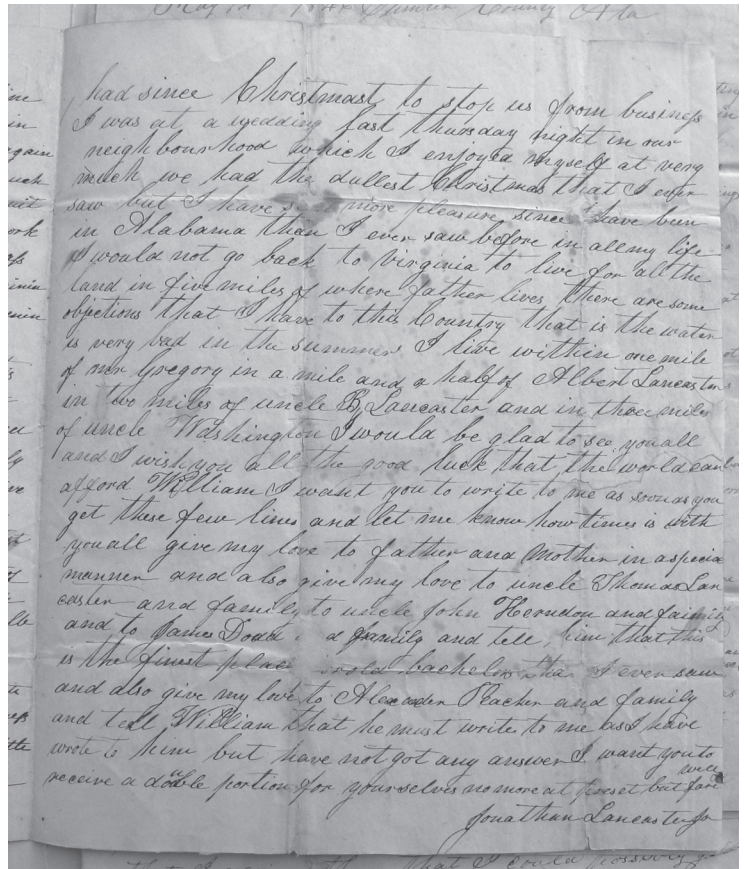
Alabama, Sumpter, County January 15th 1845
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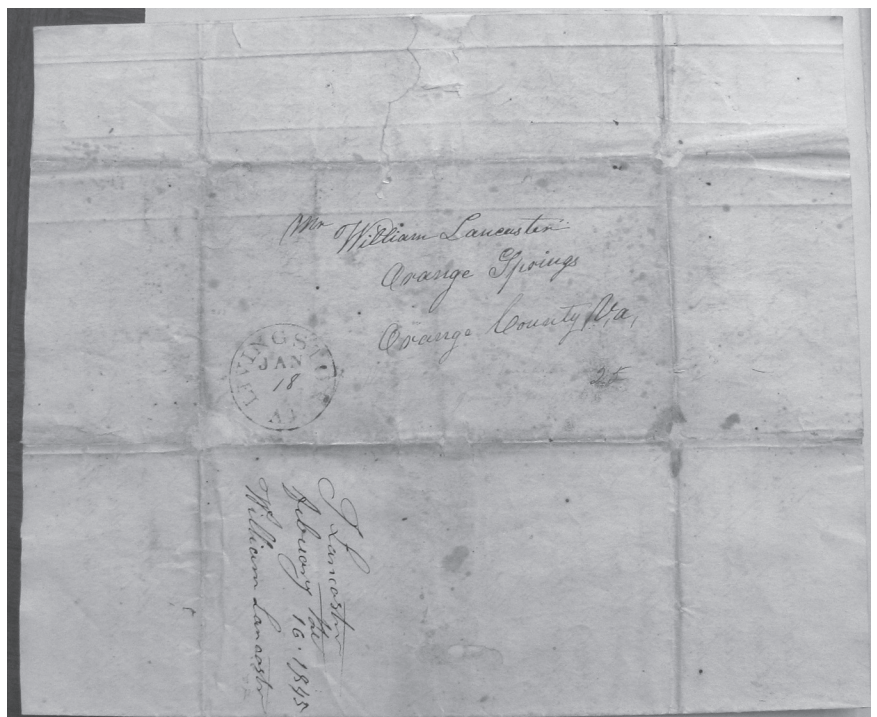
Lancaster (continued)

per pound we have had the finest weather for business this winter that I ever saw we have had but very little cold weather today is the first rainy day we have [next page] had since Christmast to stop us from business I was at a wedding last Thursday night in our neighbourhood which I enjoyed myself at very much we had the dullest Christmas that I ever saw but I have [seen] more pleasure since I have been in Alabama than I ever saw before in all my life I would not go back to Virginia to live for all the land in five miles of where father lives there are some objections that I have to this Country that is the water is very bad in the summer I live within one mile of Mr Gregory in a mile and a half of Albert Lancaster in two miles of uncle B Lancaster and in three miles of uncle Washington I would be glad to see you all and I wish you all the good luck that the world can afford William I want you to write to me as soon as you get these few lines and let me know how times is with you all give my love to father and mother in a special manner and also give my love to uncle Thomas Lancaster and family to uncle John Herndon and family and to James Dodd and family and tell him that this is the finest place for old bachelors that I ever saw and also give my love to Alexander Peacher and family and tell William that he must write to me as I have wrote to him but have not got any answer I want you to receive a double portion for yourselves no more at preset but fare well

Jonathan Lancaster Jr.



[Addressed to]
 Mr William Lancaster
 Orange Springs
 Orange County Va
 [signed]
 J Lancaster
 February the 16 1845
 William Lancaster
 [postmarked]
 Livingston Al Jan 18



Source: Lancaster Letters, Folder 1, 1845–1852, Box BC 0007419813, Accession No. 24851, Personal Papers, Archives and Manuscripts, Library of Virginia, Richmond.

Orange County Historical Society
130 Caroline Street
Orange, VA 22960

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Edna Lewis Honored on Celebrity Chef Postage Stamp

Orange County native and renowned chef Edna Lewis (1916-2006) is included among the five American chefs honored by the USPS on the Celebrity Chefs stamps. These stamps, officially issued on September 26, 2014, also honor James Beard, Joyce Chen, Julia Child, and Edward (Felipe) Rojas-Lombardi.



Edna Lewis
FOREVER · USA

USPS

2014

Please Join Us!

We invite you to join the Orange County Historical Society. Please provide your name and contact information as you wish it to appear in our records and select the appropriate dues level. Mail the completed form, along with your dues payment to The Orange County Historical Society, to 130 Caroline Street, Orange, VA 22960.

The Orange County Historical Society is a non-profit organization. Your membership fees are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Name: _____

(If business/organization member, name of business or organization)

Street: _____

City: _____

State: _____ **Zip:** _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Membership Status: New Renewal Address, name, etc. update

Would you be willing to receive meeting notices via email in lieu of a postcard? Yes No

Membership Level: Society dues are for the period of January 1 - December 31.

Annual Individual Member: \$20

Annual Student Member (High School or College): \$12.50

Annual Family Member: \$30

Annual Sustaining Member: \$100

Annual Patron Member: \$200

Annual Sponsor Member: \$300