



Historic Perspectives

Preservation of Prince William County's Historic Resources

Spring 2024 Contents

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PRINCE WILLIAM

Historic Preservation

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Building the Oral History Program

The Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) has been gathering oral histories for over two decades, collecting stories of Prince William County's past through interviews with its citizens. From residents of small communities to former members of the Board of County Supervisors, these interviewees have shared varied and meaningful perspectives on the experience of living in Prince William County. Moreover, gathering oral histories allows the Office of Historic Preservation to expand interpretation beyond county-owned sites and to collect experiences from the past few decades.

Over the past year the oral history program has become more focused on recording

stories of influential contributors to Prince William County's government and infrastructure. This set of interviews began with Sheriff Glendell Hill, who joined the Manassas Police Department in 1969, becoming the first Black police officer in Manassas as well as the first Black employee of Manassas. In 1974, he became a detective in the department. Hill joined the Prince William-Manassas Adult Detention Center, a new facility, in 1982, and went on to spend the next two decades of his career there, eventually serving as the Superintendent beginning in 1993. In November 2003, Sheriff Hill was elected as the Sheriff of Prince William County, becoming the first Black sheriff in Prince William County as well as the first



Coker's Pharmacy in Manassas, one of the restaurants described by Sheriff Glendell Hill.

Black person elected to a County position.

Sheriff Hill's accomplishments are exceptional. However, oral history interviews cover more than accomplishments, especially ones that could be easily referenced in other sources. Sheriff Hill also recalled other aspects of his early career in Manassas, including favorite restaurants he frequented such as Kline's Drive-in and Cocke's Pharmacy, which served "a nice hot dog and a milkshake". These restaurants no longer exist, and historical tidbits such as these are essential to preserving community memory. Moreover, oral history interviews provide personal insight, such as when Sheriff Hill was asked about the impact his family has had on his career and the influence public perception has had on his daily life. His answers contribute to a well-rounded personal history, looking beyond accomplishments and recording a more complete story.

Paul Ebert's interview took place in August 2023. Ebert, who was also referenced in Sheriff Hill's interview, served as Commonwealth's Attorney for Prince William County. He prosecuted numerous notable cases during his career, including the 1993-1994 separate trials of John and Lorena Bobbitt, as well as the 2003 trial of John Allen Muhammed, one of the DC snipers. Ebert retired in 2019, closing out over five decades as Commonwealth's Attorney for Prince William County. At the time of his retirement, he was the longest serving Commonwealth's Attorney in Virginia history.

Ebert's interview added insight into an important piece of local



A CALMER TIME — One month ago it was that Commonwealth's Atty. Paul Ebert (left) bodily ejected Ralph Mauller (right), then a supervisor-elect, out of the Prince William board chamber. On Monday, Mauller listened, as a board member, while Ebert explained his position on defending School Board appointment suit. (Potomac News photo by Herald Grandstaff)

Paul Ebert and Ralph Mauller, Potomac News, January 1972.

lore. The "Four Horsemen" were a controversial group of Prince William Board of County Supervisors who often voted as a block, serving from 1972-1976. Ebert recalled the uproar their actions caused, remembering "and then those people on the Board did not want the police department, that's when we had kind of a hassle, and on the when they, the so-called Four Horsemen took office, they fired a county judge, locked, changed all the



Kathleen Seefeldt

locks in the courthouse, and tried to get rid of the police department. Long history of small-town politics..." Ebert's interview isn't the first OHP interview to document the history of the Four Horsemen. Intern Lydia Neuroth interviewed one of these supervisors, Ralph Mauller, in 2014, only a few years before his death in 2019.

Recently, staff recorded an interview with Kathleen Seefeldt, former Chair of the Board of County Supervisors. Seefeldt was the Occoquan District

Supervisor from 1976-1991 and was the first at-large Chair of the PWC Board from 1991-1999. Seefeldt took office after the terms of the Four Horsemen and served on the Board during two controversial proposed development projects near Manassas Battlefield. Her accomplishments also include bringing the George Mason campus to Prince William County and strongly advocating for improving transportation. Seefeldt's interview is currently being transcribed and annotated.

Once completed, all interviews in this project will be placed on the Historic Communities page and filed at the Ruth E. Lloyd Information Center (RELIC). These interviews are only a small part of the Office of Historic Preservation's continued mission to "build community identity by telling the story of the people of Prince William County." The history these interviewees recall may seem recent to some, but if efforts aren't made to capture it now, it stands the chance of being lost to future historians.

Lauren Maloy
Historic Communities Coordinator

Collections Corner



This past year the Prince William County Office of Historic Preservation updated our collections software. Like many museum systems the

Office of Historic Preservation uses PastPerfect to manage and inventory all the collection items that we are tasked with maintaining for future generations.

For nearly 20 years of the Office's history we used the industry standard, a PastPerfect system that ran on one computer. Starting in 2023 we transitioned to PastPerfect Web Edition. This new system provides better access to the software for both staff and trained volunteers. At a future undetermined date, we will be sharing portions of our collections on PastPerfect onto our website. This will allow members of the public and other researchers to explore and interact with Prince William County's collection from not just the Commonwealth, but all across the world.

Bill Backus
Preservationist and Curator



Marking the 250th Anniversary of the Prince William County Resolves

Saturday, June 8, 2024 ♦ 10 am – 3 pm
Merchant Park 3944 Cameron St, Dumfries, VA 22026

In June 1774, Prince William County citizens protested the British parliament's passage of the "Intolerable Acts" by drafting and signing the Prince William Resolves. Commemorate this momentous step towards independence by attending a free family-friendly program marking the 250th anniversary.

Events include:

- Immersive play reenacting the historic debate
- Children's activities
- Puppet Shows
- Tours of Dumfries and the Weems-Botts Museum
- Food, Music, & More!



PRINCE WILLIAM
Historic Preservation



Call 703-792-4754 for more information.



Image Spotlight

Quantico Shipyard

In 1916 the Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company built a seven-slip shipyard for wooden vessels at Quantico. During WWI they produced seven vessels for the US Emergency Fleet Corporation, and had 12 government cottages built for workers use. The yard closed in 1919 when the Navy Department condemned the property for the Marine Corps base.

John McDonald, Historic Interpreter, Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre

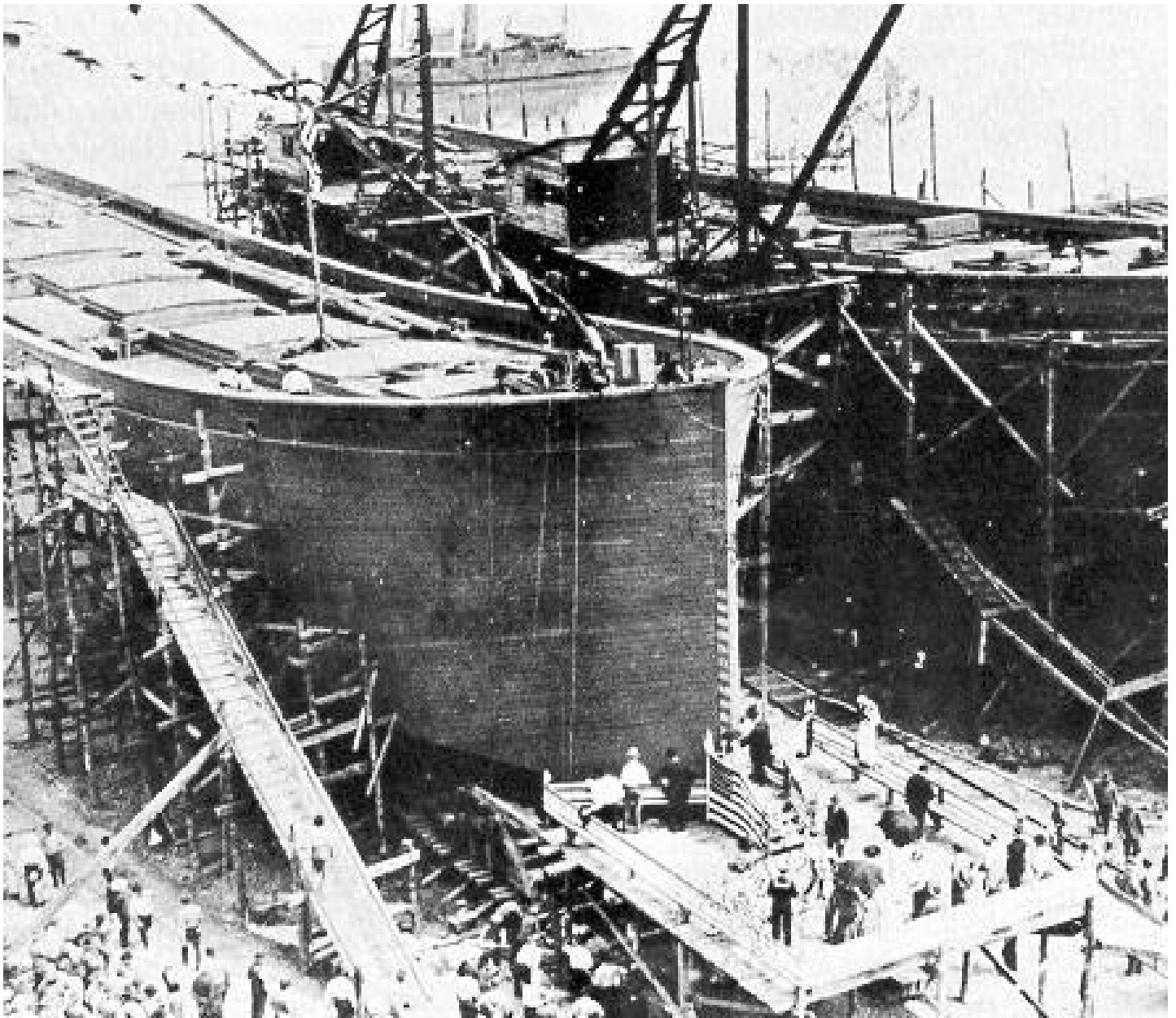


Image of Ships in Drydock



History Corner

What About the Surgeons Who Served at Pringle's House General Hospital

The Doctors who served at Pringle House General Hospital after the Battle of 1st Manassas in July 1861 have some interesting ties to other historical events. Some we know little about other than their presence in the hospital. Here is some general historical information about the Surgeons that were at Pringle House in 1861.

Doctor Daniel Burr Conrad was born on February 2, 1831. He joined the U.S. Navy as an Assistant Surgeon in 1854 and spent the next seven years doing service from the Mediterranean to Japan. He served on the U.S.S. Congress and Brooklyn. As the storm clouds of the Civil War drew close, his family was involved early on when his father was requested by John Brown to serve as his defense attorney following the raid of Harper's Ferry. His father, Burr Conrad, Sr., said no. In 1861, Daniel B. Conrad sailed into Boston Harbor, Massachusetts, and discovered the nation was tearing itself apart. He refused to take the loyalty oath and was arrested. He escaped, (there



Doctor Daniel Burr Conrad

was a fair amount of assistance from Union officers still in uniform) and returned to Virginia where he enlisted as a surgeon in the Virginia State Navy and was quickly transferred to the Confederate Navy. Since there was a shortage of billets on CSN ships, he then enlisted as a surgeon in the 2nd Virginia Infantry, Company C.

Dr. Conrad provided his hospital steward, Edward A. Craighill, with directions to where his

cousin, Colonel Francis J. Thomas had fallen in battle. Those directions were provided to Craighill on the night of July 21, 1861. Since Craighill was at Pringle House that night, it is likely that Dr. Conrad was also at the Pringle House as well. Dr. Conrad and Craighill were in the same Company, working alongside one another at Pringle House Hospital.

From 1st Manassas, Dr. Conrad went to New Orleans and the battles which resulted in the fall of the Crescent City. Dr. Conrad was back in Virginia at Drewry's Bluff in time to repulse monitor class iron clads. His medical skills were considered helpful to Stonewall Jackson's chief

surgeon, Dr. Hunter H. McGuire because he tried to get Dr. Conrad back, however, the Navy said no. Meanwhile, Dr. Conrad was assigned a tour on a blockade-runner and corresponded with his sister who was sassing Yankees captured in Winchester, Virginia.

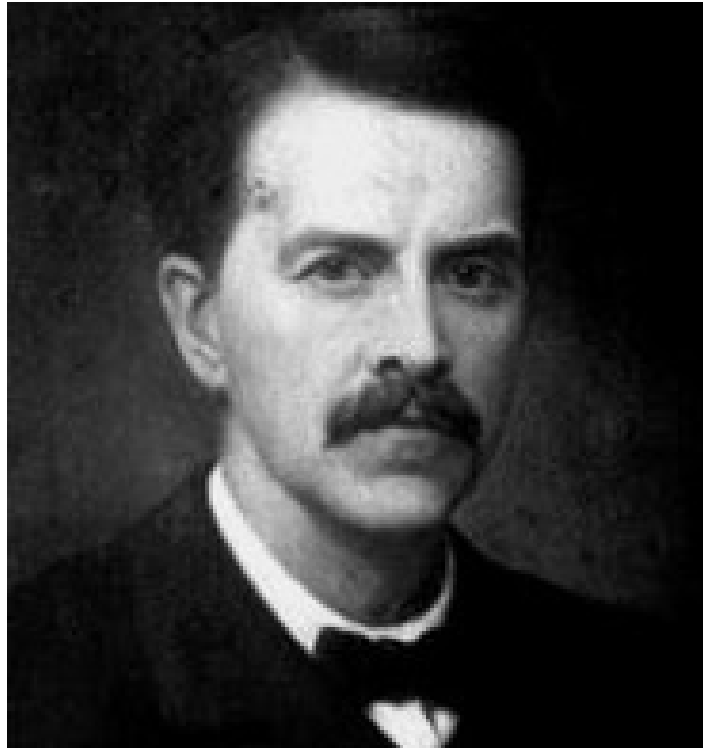
Dr. Conrad eventually became part of a Confederate raiding party that successfully boarded and destroyed the Union block-

ader “Underwriter”. After this event, Dr. Conrad reported to the ironclad “Tennessee” in time for the battle of Mobile Bay.

Dr. Conrad died on September 20, 1898, and is buried at Mount Hebron Cemetery in Winchester, Virginia

Doctor Hunter H. McGuire was born in the family home at Braddock and Amherst Streets in Winchester, Virginia, on October 11, 1835. His father, Dr. Hugh Holmes McGuire, was a prominent ophthalmologist, a pioneer in eye surgery. Hunter often accompanied his father and studied medicine at Winchester Medical College which was founded and run by his father. Hunter graduated from medical school in the spring of 1855 when he was 19. Hunter continued medical school in Philadelphia at Jefferson Medical College, however, his studies were interrupted by the onset of hostilities leading to the Civil War. Hunter taught briefly at Tulane University in New Orleans before joining the Confederate Army in 1861.

Hunter joined “The Winchester Rifles”, Company F of the 2nd Virginia Infantry as a private in the Confederate Army. However, his services were much more valuable as a surgeon rather than as a front-line soldier. McGuire was made a brigade surgeon and ordered to report to General Thomas J. Jackson at Harper’s Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia). Jackson initially scoffed at McGuire’s youth; however, the two men became very close as the war progressed. Dr. McGuire treated General Jackson after the Battle of First Manassas. McGuire



Doctor Hunter H. McGuire

was also instrumental in establishing the Pringle House General Hospital.

In 1862, Dr. McGuire was promoted to chief surgeon of Jackson’s Corps, serving in the Army of Northern Virginia. He amputated General Richard Ewell’s leg after the Battle of Groveton (2nd Manassas) in August 1862. In May 1863, General Jackson, wounded by friendly fire while performing reconnaissance at Chancellorsville, was operated on by McGuire. Jackson’s left arm was amputated. During the Battle of 2nd Winchester, McGuire served under Richard Ewell. At Gettysburg, McGuire amputated the leg of General Isaac R. Trimble after Pickett’s Charge and later served under Jubal Early. McGuire was captured at Waynesboro in March 1865 but was released because of his status as a surgeon and rejoined the Army of Northern Virginia. Dr. McGuire was present at the surrender at Appomattox Court-house.

Many argue that during the war Dr. McGuire revolutionized American battlefield medicine because of his efforts in declaring medical staff members as non-combatants, thus having them immediately released after capture – regardless of side. This act humanized the battlefield and gave injured men a better chance of survival.

Doctor Isaac Scott Tanner was born near Clear Spring in Washington County, Maryland on September 22, 1818. He appeared on the 1860 Census as having a Shepherdstown address in Jefferson County, Virginia (now West

Virginia). He graduated from New York University in 1845 and graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York in 1847. Isaac joined the US Navy as a Surgeon but was forced to resign because he suffered from motion sickness. Tanner went home and enlisted in Company F, the Shepherdstown Troop of Cavalry on April 18, 1861, as a 2nd Lieutenant and remained as such until his formal resignation on September 27, 1861. Tanner was called on to serve as an Assistant Surgeon after the Battle of 1st Manassas for three weeks at Pringle House General Hospital. After this, Dr. Tanner was appointed Surgeon of the 21st North Carolina Infantry in 1862. In 1863 he was promoted to Brigade Surgeon, later the same year, Dr. Tanner was promoted to the position of Chief Surgeon in General Hoke’s Division. Dr. Tanner served on General Joseph E. Johnston’s staff. He was paroled in Greens-

boro, North Carolina on April 26, 1865.

After the war, Dr. Tanner returned to Shepherdstown, Virginia, and resumed working as a doctor as well as farming. Dr. Tanner died on April 10, 1903, and is buried at Elmwood Cemetery on Shepherdstown, Virginia.

Doctor Sam B. Fisher was a surgeon at the Pringle House General Hospital. A native of Fauquier County, he was born October 12, 1812 and graduated with his MD from the University of Pennsylvania in 1835. He remained a hospital surgeon after leaving Pringle House, briefly serving as Post Surgeon of Manassas. Reassigned as Surgeon in Charge of the General Hospital in Warrenton until the hospital closed in 1862, Fisher was transferred to Richmond as Surgeon in Charge of Greanor's Hospital.

Interestingly, he would be captured in Warrenton on August



Surgeon John Alexander Straith

15, 1863, possibly while home on leave. Accused of being a spy for being caught within the lines of the Army of the Potomac, he faced a court martial chaired by Col. Samuel Buck, 2nd NJ Vol. and was found not guilty. Ordered to be treated as a regular surgeon prisoner, Dr. Fisher was held at

Old Capitol Prison, Ft. McHenry, and Point Lookout before being exchanged. He took over duties at the conscript Camp of Instruction at Columbia, SC in the spring of 1864, before being transferred to the hospital in Staunton, VA that summer. Dr. Fisher went back to Richmond in February 1865 to take charge of the Chaffin's Bluff Hospital and took the oath of allegiance to surrender in Winchester on April 8, 1865.

He died in the District of Columbia on April 7, 1885. He had moved there from Warrenton in 1867 after the death

of his wife Mary. His son Edward served in Company H, 4th VA Cavalry throughout the war.

Surgeon John Alexander Straith, 2nd Virginia Infantry Regiment and Medical Staff Confederate States Infantry Regiment in uniform

John Alexander Straith was born on January 26, 1835, and enlisted on May 17, 1861, as an Assistant Surgeon and was commissioned into Field & Staff VA 2nd Infantry. He served at the Pringle House General Hospital after First Manassas and gave care to Captain William Fitzhugh Lee who died of his wounds on July 29, 1861. He is listed on rolls for the 2nd Virginia on December 31, 1861 (place not stated, no further record). He died January 4, 1872, and is buried at the Zion Episcopal Cemetery, Charlestown, W.V.

Dave Born
Historic Interpreter, Ben Lomond
Historic Site

Take a Sip of History:
The Civilian Conservation Corps
May 1
6:30-8 p.m.
FREE
Donations Welcome

PRINCE WILLIAM
Historic Preservation
Water's End Brewery in Lake Ridge
12425 Dillingham Square, Lake Ridge, VA 22192



- Staff joins AASLH History in our Parks Committee. Paige Gibbons Backus has been asked to serve on the American Association of State & Local History (AASLH) History in Our Parks Committee. The History in Our Parks Committee works to bring together history practitioners who operate at public parks agencies throughout the United States. In this new role, she will help collectively identify challenges, solve problems, and provide a source of community through networking, training, and collaborative efforts with other organizations.
- Paige has also been named the Vice President for Governance for the Virginia Association of Museums.



Staff at VAM

- Staff member Nate McDonald recently spoke to the Bull Run Civil War on the Battle of Droop Mountain.
- Staff member Dan Goldstein was recently appointed to

the Board of the Rappahannock Heritage Center. This local archive contains records for Stafford and Spotsylvania Counties as well as the City of Fredericksburg.

- HP Staff attended the Virginia Association of Museums Conference in Virginia Beach March 9-12.
- Staff member Nate McDonald attended the premiere of “Travels with Darley” episode filmed in PWC in January. Nate was featured as well as staff member Kevin Pawlak on the episode highlighting some of our historic sites in Prince William County.

Dan Goldstein
Historic Interpreter, Rippon Lodge
Historic Site

Foundation Update

2023 was another successful year for the Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation. We successfully assisted with the completion of the Thoroughfare Cemetery Project and have started to assist with the Williams Ordinary Revolutionary War projects. In November, a

new slate of officers was elected. Earnie Porta is now serving as President, assisted by Cornelia Rutherford as Vice-President, Sharon Pandak as Treasurer, and Sandra Sargent round out the Foundation’s officers. After many years of service Michael Johnson, Victorialynn Johnson, and Michael

Garcia have left the Foundation Board members with the organization in a stronger position. We are looking forward to the new year’s efforts preserving and interpreting our community’s rich historical legacy.

Bill Backus
Preservationist & Curator

Prince William County
Has a Past That is Worth Preserving

Become a Foundation Member!
www.pwhpf.org

For the latest information
about our events and
upcoming programs visit
our website:

pwcva.gov/history