



Fall 2014

Our title is in homage to the title of the first (1838) publication in Jamestown—John Sherwood's *The Farmer's Advocate and Miscellaneous Reporter*.



The Farmer's Advocate And Miscellaneous Reporter

Published Sporadically, But Enthusiastically

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www.mendenhallhomeplace.com

A Message from the President

Conversation with the Thursday Ladies and the Revival of *The Farmers' Advocate and Miscellaneous Reporter*

Mendenhall Homeplace is a place of discovery—a place where curious people gather to explore the past and its relevance to the present. One way you can be a part of this discovery process yourself is to stop by the Mendenhall House on a Thursday.

By 11:30 a.m., the Thursday Ladies (Mary Browning, Jane Wade, and Joanne Mann) are gathering in the office before they move upstairs to work with archiving collected materials and information. Conversation is informal, settling on various topics of local interest. In recent weeks, discussion has touched on the Johnson Shoe Company, local gold mines, regional dissenters during the Civil War era, and “the high house of Henry Humphreys” (who built the first steam-powered cotton mill in Greensboro) near Richard Mendenhall’s home.

Among these keepers of history, plenty of rich and colorful knowledge begs to be shared. Feel free to stop in with a question of your own, or just come to enjoy a delightful conversation with serendipitous turns.

Our knowledgeable site manager, Shawn Rogers, is likely to contribute his own awareness and continuing discoveries to the discussion. Of course, you also may come by anytime the doors are open and let Shawn give you the grand tour. The Historic Jamestown Society printed the *Farmer's Advocate* from 1975 until 1985 and irregularly into the mid-1990s. The publication’s name honors an earlier publication. Between 1838 and 1842, John Sherwood published the original *Farmer's Advocate and Miscellaneous Reporter*, right here in Jamestown. It was North Carolina’s first agricultural journal.

How exciting to see *The Farmer's Advocate* revived! Thanks to Jane Wade, with help from Mary Browning and Joann Mann, our Thursday Ladies. Thanks also to Shawn Rogers for his support.

--Julia Ebel, Historic Jamestown Society president

From the Desk of the Director

Dear Friends,

It is an honor and a privilege to serve as Director of Mendenhall Plantation, and it gives me great pleasure to share news of the site's successes and our vision for the future.

If you have had a chance to drive by Mendenhall lately, you may have noticed the new fence that fronts the property at West Main Street and partially surrounds the parking area. This lovely split-rail fence was installed earlier this year by Seegars Fence Co., thanks to a Jamestown Town Funding Grant. A portion of those funds were also used to remove dead, or dying, trees that served as a threat to personal and material safety. In addition, the Town of Jamestown has awarded Historic Jamestown Society with a Town Funding Grant to be used to repair, or replace, the failing gutters of the Pennsylvania-style Bank Barn and the Mendenhall House. Funds from this grant have also been earmarked for the repair, or replacement, of rotted siding on the old barn.

Unfortunately, masonry issues have been discovered in the chimney stacks of Mendenhall House that will require the partial reconstruction of at least one stack and a significant amount of mortar pointing in the other three stacks. I am currently working with the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, the U.S. Secretary of Interior's office, the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission, the Guilford County Planning office, and the High Point Community Foundation to acquire grant funding to complete these much needed repairs.

Funding is also being sought to restore the historic stone walk that was recently uncovered at the front of the Mendenhall House. The area leading to the stone walk from the parking area will be graded and paved with historically appropriate paving stones in order to provide improved accessibility for guests with limited mobility. As always, your contributions are gratefully accepted and greatly appreciated.

With an eye toward improving our interpretive programming and increasing our ability to accommodate larger groups of guests, the Mendenhall Plantation will be recruiting and training docents (volunteer tour guides). If you, or someone you know, is interested in helping us to share the meaningful stories, experiences, and objects of our community's past, please give me a call at: 336.454.3819, or drop me a line at: director@mendenhallplantation.org. Of course, if leading tours isn't your cup of tea, there are a number of volunteer opportunities available. Your talent, hard work, and dedication is exactly what Mendenhall Plantation needs to help serve our community and our guests.

Please join us in making this the best year yet for Mendenhall Plantation.

Sincerely,

Shawn Rogers, Director

Needed at the Homeplace

DATES TO REMEMBER

October-November 2014...Picture Jamestown Contest

3:30 pm, November 14, 2014...Tea at the Homeplace

4:00 pm, November 9, 2014...Annual Volunteer Luncheon

3:00 pm, December 14, 2014...Annual Membership Meeting

1 chain saw

1 wheelbarrow

If you have one of these items you would like to donate, please bring by the Mendenhall Homeplace or call Shawn Rogers, Director, at 454-3819.



It Happened in Old Jamestown

Miss Sophie Tilden who knew so much of the history of Jamestown was always happy to share, especially the odd or quirky stories that she knew I would enjoy. This was a tale she shared in a letter dated October 31, 1978.

By Jane Wade

“My uncle, Alexander W. Robbins, was a magistrate here about 1881. Court was held in the Masonic Lodge building, which stood in the corner of West Main and Scientific Streets. This is the story of one of his cases.”

There were three men living in a boxcar which had been placed alongside the railroad track. While they were working on the railroad, this boxcar was their home where they cooked, ate, and slept. Because they didn't have much time for a lunch break, they cooked enough at breakfast for that meal and lunch, too. That way, they could quickly run in at noon and have their meal. They would cook again for supper.

A tramp found the door unlocked and went in. He partook of what he found to eat. They had left a pan of biscuits, fried meat and some prepared dried beans left over from the night before. The tramp ate what was supposed to feed three men. When the men came home and found their food was gone, they went out to hunt for the culprit. He was easily found down the track, sitting and resting after a full meal—probably his first in many days.

A warrant was issued for his arrest. The tramp was a Norwegian and spoke only a few English. All he would say was, “Un square meal” in broken English. The magistrate said the best thing he could do would be to give him thirty days in jail where he would get enough to eat.

The men told that they had a glass pepper shaker and it had been totally emptied. The tramp must have liked pepper in his beans and bacon.

Summer at Mendenhall Homeplace

Word is getting out about good things happening in Jamestown at the Mendenhall Homeplace.

Village Fair brought in a record number of visitors, who talked with crafters, mingled as music played, and explored the house and grounds. Returning crafters as well as new ones shared skills from blacksmithing to chair-making, painting to quilting. With children's games on the tanning meadow and a juggler on Union Street, the feeling was festive as we celebrated our history with those who came. We are grateful to volunteers who welcomed guests and made the day go smoothly. We are also grateful to the community businesses that sponsored Village Fair.

We regularly receive visitors from faraway places: California, New Hampshire, Colorado, Scotland.... Some come while visiting family in the area. Others come in search of Quaker heritage. After one of Shawn's enthusiastic and informative tours, they tell others about Mendenhall Homeplace. Word is getting out!

Got Walnuts?

Do you have fresh and mature black walnuts or hickory nuts in your yard? Are you willing to donate them to Historic Jamestown Society? This will be a money-making project for the HJS. We have an offer to purchase these nuts for a nickel apiece.

You may drop off your walnuts and hickory nuts at the Homeplace during these times **only: October 14 and 28, between 4:00 and 6:00**. Ed Ingle will be there to receive them.

A Special Happening:

Treat yourself and a friend to *Tea at the Homeplace* on Friday, November 14, at 3:30. Enjoy good food and friendly conversation in the Mendenhall House. Space is limited to 18, so sign up early. Reservations are required. The cost is \$15.00 per person.

Picture Jamestown

Keep your camera handy because the Picture Jamestown Photo Contest will be receiving submitted photos between October 1 and November 30. This year's theme will be **Main Street, Jamestown, NC**. Images that capture the people and places on or around Main Street will be considered. Check the website for full information. www.mendenhallplantation.org

Annual Meeting

Mark your calendar for the Annual Meeting on December 14, at 3:00. Gertrude Beal will speak on the Underground Railroad in Guilford County.

Come to a Party – 1899 Style

Social styles may come and go, but birthdays are always a cause for celebration. For a glimpse at how two special women were feted on their day...115 years ago...we are reprinting this article from the GREENSBORO PATRIOT, November 1, 1899. Thanks are due to Mary Browning who passed it along.

On the 30th, several enjoyed a rare treat at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Moore in Jamestown.

The occasion was the 84th birthday of Mrs. Laura Coffin, well known in our county as the wife of the late Dr. Shubal Coffin, and the approaching 86th birthday of Minerva T. Mendenhall. These two are cousins and life-long friends, and near relatives of each were invited to meet them.

The two guests of honor were well and happy and full of cheer, and it was indeed a treat to see them enjoy the company and the beautiful dinner.

Although the day was disagreeable without, everything within was most attractive. The home was beautifully decorated with the young sprouts of the long leaved pine. These were two or three feet tall with the long slender needles growing from the stem and covering almost the whole of it, the grey moss from the trees near Goldsboro was suspended by doors windows as smilax is used in decorations, and the green leaves and red berries of the native holly brightened all the room. One seldom sees a more harmonious effect than that of the long leaved pine and the gray moss.

There were gathered here in the old Coffin homestead—children, grandchildren, and one great grandchild

of Mr. Coffin. The oldest daughter, Mrs. Gregory, of Greensboro, was present.

William Coffin, the well-known railroad official, was here with his entire family. Mr. Ragan, of High Point, Mr. Kirkman and daughters, also of High Point, Oliver Benbow and family, and other relatives attended.

It is quite impossible to describe the bountiful and beautiful dinner. The table was decorated with ferns and loaded with dainties, from turkey to barbequed pig. This last dish was the contribution of Mr. Oliver Benbow in the culinary line and was greatly relished by the guests. The celery was uncommonly fine...perfectly crisp and fresh. All were interested to find that instead of an imported article, it was raised by Mrs. Laura Kirkman in her garden at High Point, and was her contribution to her mother's birthday dinner.

Old-fashioned pound cake was served amid the newer varieties, and the dinner was tipped with delicious grape juice or unfermented wine prepared by the deft hostess.

In conversation after dinner the two old ladies described the "falling of the stars in '33", and Mrs. Coffin told how Minerva Mendenhall's father enjoyed that wonderful spectacle and also of a neighbor who owned one slave and said, "Well, Bob, the end of the world has come. You are a free man, Bob. Do the best you can for yourself now—you are free." After the sun began to show that the end had not come, he said, "Well, Bob, it seems as if things are going on. Hitch up Fan to the wagon and haul us a load of wood."

A most enjoyable day it was and all were grateful to the kind host and hostess for providing such a treat and could join in wishing many happy returns of the day to all.