



GOOCHLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Volume 22, Number 3

P.O. Box 602 2875 River Road West, Goochland, Virginia 23063

December, 2001

**DOCUMENTARY PREMIERS AT
DECEMBER MEETING**

A documentary film produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) will be shown at the December 9th annual meeting. The Historical Society's volunteers, and the curator, Kathleen Cabell, worked with producer Inge Hanson to do research for the project entitled "Roots in Wales".

The film is narrated by Eddy L. Harris, author of *South of Haunted Dreams* (Simon & Schuster). Mr. Harris is descended from Joseph Harris, an African-American, who was born at "Golden Meadows" in Goochland county in 1796. Also known as the "old Harris house", Golden Meadows was home to Mr. Walter Joyce and his grandmother for many years. Parts of this house were saved by Mr. and Mrs. Charles White when it was demolished for new development. They used the brick and woodwork to build a wing on their new home located near the original site.

Sebastian Völcker, Melvin Howell, James Harris, Pamela Ellis Murphy, Marie Mabry, and Ruth Quarles provided assistance to Ms. Hanson and crew during the filming.

The Society now owns a video copy of the film, compliments of Ms. Hanson and the BBC-Wales.

**ANNUAL MEETING
Members Only**

Sunday, December 9 at 4 o'clock

at

"Lioncrest"

**2551 River Road West
Maidens, Virginia**

The December meeting of the Historical Society will be held on Sunday, December 9 at 4:00 PM at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Robert C. Williams. The entrance is .7 miles east of the blinking light at Route 522 (Maiden's Bridge) intersection with River Road West. Someone will be at the entrance gate to welcome members. Spacious parking is available. We greatly appreciate the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Williams.

The program for this meeting will consist of a brief annual report from each of several committees. In addition, Mrs. Ann Bright, program chair, has arranged for a special viewing of the BBC-Wales special, "Roots in Wales" that was partially filmed in Goochland. Holiday treats will be made available through the efforts of Mrs. Polly Anderson, hospitality chair.

The following article is a synopsis of the film "Roots in Wales" written for the BBC by producers John Pierce Jones and Inge Hanson. The Director for the film was Alun Huws, BBC Staff Director. The Society is grateful to Ms. Hanson for making this synopsis available to be reprinted in the newsletter.

An astonishing number of black Americans have Welsh surnames. The Welsh Chapel in Los Angeles scrapped a membership drive to contact every person with a Welsh name listed in the LA phone book because 75% belonged to blacks with no apparent connection to Wales. "Davies" is one of the most common family names among American blacks.

What is Wales' relationship to black America? Answers unfold as Eddy L. Harris, a black American author famous for his top-selling, controversial books chronicling his search for his identity, investigates the origin of his own Welsh surname. He has already traveled the globe seeking his roots - through Africa, Harlem and the Deep South. Now Harris heads for Wales to track down ancestors he has traced to a mulatto slave fathered by John Harris, a Colonial planter from Goochland, Virginia whose ancestors likely hailed from Wales.

Harris's trek will illuminate Welsh/American connections forged through immigration and slavery from the unique perspective of a black American looking to Wales for Answers to his past, a refreshing reversal from previous documentaries where the Welsh look at America. At the same time, Harris is asking universal questions about what roots, identity and our family name means for each of us. Harris' travels take him from Virginia plantations to Welsh farm houses as he visits cemeteries, examines courthouse records, and talks with all kinds of people to uncover clues to his ancestry. In the end, it does not matter whether Harris's ancestors were Welsh. This program focuses on the meaning of the search for roots and belonging which is the continuing and controversial theme running through all of Harris's books.

Along the way, Harris can look at what being Welsh means, to the people who simply bear Welsh names and to those raised here in Wales. His perspective as a black American can illuminate race issues here: does racial prejudice exist or are we as accepting as we like to believe? The journey is underscored by music ranging from Negro spirituals and the blues to Welsh hymns.

Eddy Harris will present the programme. He is published by Viking/Penguin in the UK where reviewers praise him as the equal of Bruce Chatwin and Paul Theroux. He is the author of *Mississippi Solo*, *Native Stranger*, *South of Haunted Dreams*, and *Still Life in Harlem*. Harris divides his time between Paris and his hometown, St. Louis, Missouri where he is a professor of creative writing and African American Literature at Washington University. He is also in demand as a lecturer and for guest appearances on television and radio talk shows.

2001 HOUSE TOUR

The 2001 house tour was a success! Participants enjoyed a beautiful fall day while touring five outstanding homes. Each of the houses displayed a different style of architecture and interior furnishings. We are deeply grateful to the homeowners, the volunteers and tour participants for making the day so enjoyable. Proceeds from the house tour will be used for preservation projects.

COMPUTERS

The Society has received 2 computers, monitors, and accessories through the generosity of The Johns Hopkins University computer center in Gaithersburg, MD.

New Members

A special welcome to the new members who have joined the Society since September:

Ms. Dianne Rae Dix

Mr. & Mrs. Dean Hill

Dr. & Mrs. Charles James

Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Nelson

Mr. & Mrs. George Page

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Satterfield

Mr. Barclay Utley

SOCIETY COOK BOOK

For Sale

*Favorite Recipes of
Goochland County*

1776-1976

Reprinted 2001
\$15.00

CONTACT US!

Telephone: **804.556.3966**

Visit our web site:

www.goochlandhistory.org

Visit the Center:

2875 River Road West

Let us know how we can be of help to you .

**2002-03 Slate of Officers
Goochland County Historical Society**

President- - - - - Marty MacMillan
1st Vice President- - - - Ann Bright
Programs
2nd Vice President - - - Derenda Reynolds
Membership
Secretary- - - - - Louise Thompson
Treasurer- - - - - Pete Williams

Directors

2002 Term:

- *Polly Anderson
- *Carol S. East
- *David Plageman
- *Joseph Scales

2003 Term:

- *George Pritchard
- Shirley Sydnor
- *Terry Tosh
- *Frances Truett

2004 Term:

- Audrey Eggleston
- Kitty Shield
- Ben Weimer

Phyllis Silber is the Administrator and the editor of the newsletter for the Society. Kathleen Cabell is the Curator.

* Currently serving a three year term



Derenda Reynolds, Ann Bright, Marty MacMillan, and Carole Frey

VOLUNTEER LUNCHEON

Marty MacMillan, President, entertained the 2001 volunteers with a luncheon at her home, "Rolling View". The Society is very grateful for the many hours donated by the volunteers.

**BE A PART OF
GOOCHLAND'S HISTORY**

We invite you to become a member and participate in the work of the society as a volunteer. Volunteers at the Center help with a variety of activities:

- Greet and register visitors
- Makes sales in the museum shop
- Assist with research in genealogy
- Answer correspondence as necessary
- Enter information into databases
- Proof read newsletter and brochures
- Serve as House tour hostesses

If you have an interest in becoming a volunteer, please contact Phyllis Silber at the Society. Volunteers typically work 2 1/2 hours in the morning or afternoon, one day each month. Some volunteer only for special projects.

SOCIETY RECEIVES GRANT

The Historical Society is pleased to announce that a grant in the amount of \$250.00 has been received from the Virginia Genealogical Society. This grant program is designed to support the small to moderate sized organization or library that maintains an archival program. It is a matching funds grant which means the Society will also contribute \$250.00 toward the purchase of archival materials. These materials will be used in the preservation of the many historical documents and photographs the Society is maintaining. This grant was one of four awarded in the state. Curator, Kathleen Cabell, was instrumental in submitting the application.

WINTER HOURS

The Center will be open Wednesday - Friday, 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM until April, 2002. We will be closed to visitors December 15 until January 15, 2002. Should you need to come to the Center, call in advance to make arrangements .

ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, December 9, 2001 4 o'clock

2551 River Road West

“ROOTS IN WALES”

A BBC-Wales Documentary