

RECORDATUR

REVOLUTIONARY WAR GEMS OF BEDFORD COUNTY

ARCHIVES DISCOVERIES

Having worked on a grant from the Library of Virginia now for several years to restore Bedford County's loose papers, I certainly know what it feels like to be up to my eyeballs in history. Most county residents know nothing of the treasures that the scraps of dusty paper can yield. From these documents, researchers and genealogists alike can ascertain many things about their ancestor, including whether he or she was the plaintiff or defendant in a lawsuit, was a slave or free person, bought and/or sold property, or served in the local militia. Depending upon the type of document examined, researchers can even gain insight into someone's character as well as how respected he or she was in the community.

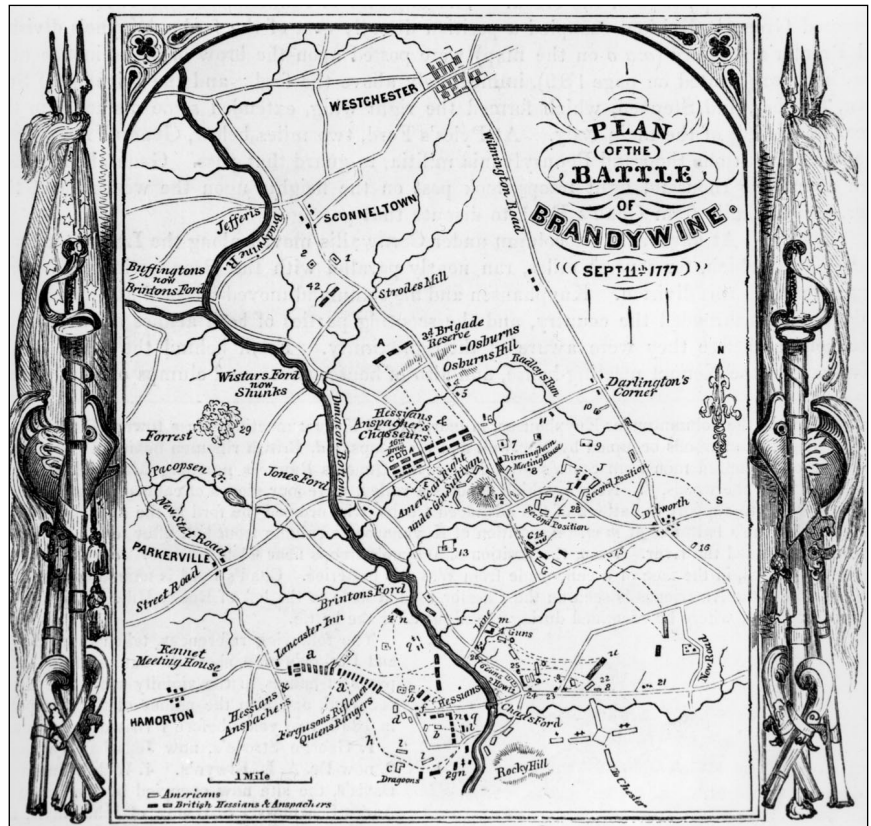
Of all the loose papers, one of the most interesting categories to the researcher is the Military and Pension Records. This category can include militia warrants, petitions to be exempt from service, commissions and appointments, militia fines and the like. Of these, I feel the most interesting are

the Revolutionary War pension declarations.

I came across these declarations quite by accident. While looking in some Woodruff drawers for judg-

ments, I came to a drawer with no handle. After prying it open, I saw what I thought were more judgments. The outside of each document was inscribed with the individuals' name and the date as well as the phrase "declaration under the act of Congress." After reviewing them further however, I realized that they were much more than law cases. It was only after I unfolded the first few documents that I knew the drawer was full of Revolutionary War pension declarations. Needless to say, I was very excited about the find.

I immediately took the drawer to my desk and began to pour over the documents. With each declaration I read I was taken back in time by the mesmerizing stories each man told. The documents not only provided valuable information ...see *Gems* page 4



Plan of the Battle of Brandywine, September 11, 1777

Winter 2003 Vol. 8, No. 1

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“An entry made on record to prevent any alteration of Record”

This newsletter is published twice a year to keep circuit court clerks informed about the court records preservation program in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Reader participation is invited.



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OF VIRGINIA**

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ADMINISTRATOR'S CORNER

The Grants Review Board met at the Library of Virginia on October 23. They awarded 23 projects in the amount of \$1,054,267. A breakdown of those awards is included in this newsletter. I want to thank Gene Coleman, Mecklenburg, and Bruce Patterson, Rockbridge, for their work on the board this year. Our third board member, Lil Hart from Chesapeake, was unable to participate due to health problems. Lil, we missed you, and we all wish you a continued successful recovery in your retirement.

The clerks who have graciously agreed to complete the Board for 2004 are Ed Semonian, Alexandria; Barbara Williams, Appomattox; and Marilyn Wilson, Amelia. I look forward to working with them this year.

Speaking of welcoming, I want to offer another word of welcome to the 13 new clerks. I had a chance to meet them briefly at the New Officers Training in Richmond and just want to say to them, as well as the “old” 107, that this office looks forward to working with you on the preservation and management of the records now in your custody.

Of the 23 grants awarded in the past cycle, eleven were for reformatting historic chancery records to digital images. This will help reduce the backlog of the 36 courts that have processed their historic chancery papers, but have been waiting for an alternative image format to

access the documents. The grants office is working with the Department of General Services on creating a state contract for this type of service that localities may utilize as well. Once this contract with multiple vendors is in place, procuring this type of service every six months will no longer be necessary.

For those clerks desiring to undertake records preservation project, the next grant application deadline is by the end of business on Monday, March 15, 2004. I want to reiterate the importance of calling our office at the beginning of the planning process, so that we may be able to effectively assist you in any procurement needs, as well as with the application itself. The *Program Description and Grants Guidelines* will be revised and made available on our website at <http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/records/vccrp.htm>. An email announcement of this, including a link to the website, will be sent when the revised information is available in January.

I trust that 2003 ended well for you and that the New Year holds the promise of less stress as you run your offices. Please call on our office whenever you believe we can assist you.

Glenn Smith, Grants Administrator

Circuit Court Records Preservation Program

**Grant Applications due by 5:00 P.M. on
Tuesday, March 15, 2004.**

**Contact Amy Judd (804/692-3601) or
Glenn Smith (804/692-3604) before
submitting an application.**

ELECTRONIC RECORDS COORDINATOR HIRED

On September 25, 2003, Christopher Gorey joined the Library of Virginia as the Electronic Records Coordinator. This position focuses on providing technical assistance with a variety of issues relating to electronic records. Current projects include revising the guidelines regarding managing email, archiving the websites of the Governor's office and cabinet officers, revising the retention schedules pertaining to electronic records, drafting guidelines for the acceptance of electronic records into the State Records Center, and updating the various workshops provided by the LVA pertaining to electronic records

including digital imaging. Before coming to the Library of Virginia, Chris spent five years with Arthur Andersen in their Global Technology Group, serving as a Network Administrator, Internal Systems Analyst, and as the Manager of IT operations for the Richmond, Virginia office. Chris has a B.S. in Economics from the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Business, and is working on an M.S. in Information Systems also from the VCU School of Business. You may contact the Electronic Records Coordinator at the Library of Virginia by phoning (804) 692-3607 or by email to cgorey@lva.lib.va.us.

THE CIRCUIT COURT RECORDS PRESERVATION PROGRAM HAS AWARDED

596 grants over 24 cycles from February 1992 to November 2003, totaling \$8,962,491.

The project types and the number awarded are:

General Preservation	25	\$238,510
Item Conservation	153	965,114
Microfilm Reader/Printers	62	758,910
Records Processing	121	1,999,478
Reformatting	142	4,533,354
Security Systems	79	439,525

Awards for 2004-A Cycle

<u>Locality</u>	<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Awarded</u>
Floyd County	Security System	\$2,745.00
Henry County	Security System	\$979.00
Russell County	Security System	\$6,700.00
Alexandria, City of	Reformatting	\$35,444.00
Bedford County	Reformatting	\$225,215.00
Fairfax County	Reformatting	\$199,328.00
Hanover County	Reformatting	\$61,397.00
Highland County	Reformatting	\$85,726.00
Louisa County	Reformatting	\$101,139.00
New Kent County	Reformatting	\$50,111.00
Northumberland County	Reformatting	\$78,189.00
Prince Edward County	Reformatting	\$7,992.00
Prince William County	Reformatting	\$53,815.00
Staunton, City of	Reformatting	\$58,008.00
Staunton, City of	Reformatting	\$21,830.00
Halifax County	Reformatting	\$8,484.00
Richmond, City of	Reformatting	\$1,968.00
Washington County	Reader/Printer	\$7,734.00
Campbell County	Item Conservation	\$7,540.00
Halifax County	Item Conservation	\$9,718.00
Henry County	Item Conservation	\$11,658.00
Russell County	Item Conservation	\$13,700.00
Scott County	Preservation	\$4,847.00

Total: \$1,081,867.00

Gems ... about each man, such as place and date of birth, but also provided superb accounts of their service. Despite the fact that most of the men stated that they could not recall much due to old age and loss of memory, they described their service in vivid detail.

Several men fought in well known battles. Benjamin Robinson fought in the Battles of Germantown and Brandywine while James Hambleton took part in the Battle of Cowpens. A few others mentioned wounds they received. Lewis B. Reynolds was wounded in the thigh while fighting at Monmouth. During the Battle at the Waxhaws in South Carolina, Frederick Padgett was badly wounded in the shoulder, arms, and legs. He was left behind by his fellow soldiers, remaining at a church hospital for sometime before walking home to Amherst County. After being wounded in the Battle of Guilford, Henry Brown Sr. remained at a hospital on the Dan River before being taken home on a litter by his father and brother.

Michael Graham chronicles his military service with chilling detail. While stationed at Brooklyn he and eight other men were ordered to perform picket duty. Not long after they went on guard, a "pretty heavy cannonading kept up and occasionally the fire of small arms" could be heard. After being ordered to retreat, he was separated from his comrades. The Americans were surrounded and it seemed that the British were coming at them in every direction. He stated, "it is impossible for me to describe the confusion and horror of the scene that ensued." Trying to escape he found himself with other Americans wading through a swamp. Some of the men were "mired and crying for Gods sake to help them out." A hasty withdrawal was necessary, thus no help was rendered. Of the nine men in his picket detachment, only he survived. These images must have haunted him for the remainder of his life.

While most men were fighting for independence in far away counties and states, others were stationed on the home front. Thomas Brown and



Battle of Germantown, October 2, 1777

Thomas Hackworth spent three months at New London (formerly in Bedford County, now Campbell County) guarding the powder magazine and restless Tories. John Vest was sent to Campbell County to protect the lead mines from the Tories, who eventually set fire to the mines. These are only a few of the many riveting stories told in these important declarations. All of these soldiers' exploits would fill up a novel.

The tales are priceless and the paper upon which they are written is in amazingly good condition. There are, of course, a handful of declarations that are on their last leg. Hopefully now that they have been removed from the Woodruff drawers and have been flat filed in acid free folders, their deterioration will slow. The documents are important not only for the insight offered into how the Colonies won independence from Great Britain, but also as testament to the deeds of many brave men. Genealogists use these declarations as a means to obtain membership in the S.A.R. (Sons of the American Revolution) and D.A.R. (Daughters of the American Revolution). Both are groups that honor these veterans. Descendants of these men should be proud to know that so much was sacrificed on their part for the sake of freedom.

Karen Glover
Local Records Processor
Bedford County, Virginia