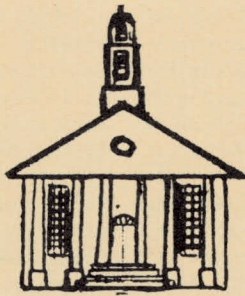


# Essex County



# Historical Society

ESSEX COUNTY 1692

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## Miss Edith Latane (1873-1960) Educator, Authoress and Historian

*The following memorial was adopted by the Essex County Historical Society upon the death of Miss Edith Latane, April 25, 1960 at Tappahannock, Virginia.*

The Essex County Historical Society takes this opportunity to place in its records this memorial to one of its founders and charter members. The Society was formed when she called together a group of twelve people to her home for the purpose of creating an organization that would concern itself with the local history of the County and in telling the story concerning its growth based upon the true facts.

History was Miss Latane's chosen field of scholarship. She collaborated with her brother, John H. Latane, in writing a textbook of history entitled *American History for Young Americans*. She taught at Miss Bullock's School in Baltimore, York Collegiate Institution and Mary Baldwin College. Miss Latane finished her active career as Headmistress of St. Margaret's School for girls in Tappahannock. Her ability as a teacher and her understanding of girls helped to establish that school to become one of the outstanding preparatory schools in

Virginia. After her retirement she continued to live in her home across the street from St. Margaret's School.

Miss Latane was one of the many fine and illustrious descendants of Parson Lewis Latane, who came to Essex County in 1700 from England\* to become the rector of South Farnham Parish soon after it was established. He lived here as rector for over thirty years. The two great colonial brick churches of the parish were built soon after he became the rector. He retired to his plantation "Langley" where his family continued to live for generations. His descendants include many who still live in Essex County as well as in other parts of the United States. Miss Latane was the last of that name to live in South Farnham Parish. She herself was the daughter of a clergyman, The Rev. James Allen Latane, who later became a Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

The Essex County Historical Society is proud and happy to place into its records this memorial to Miss Edith Latane, who helped bring it to birth and to keep it alive by her spirit.

*\*originally from France and a refugee to England from Catholic persecution of Protestants, a "French Huguenot."*

## A History of Industries in Essex County

By VAY GARNETT NEWBILL\*

The building of the colony is also the history of Essex County, for her sons acted well their part in every phase of its progress.

Log houses with mud chimneys gave way to frame and weather-boarding and later to brick. To cut weather-boarding with a rip saw, where one man stood down in a pit to pull the saw and another man above him to pull the saw back, was no small task. Wooden pegs were used in old barns and other out buildings, for nails were scarce. James McDonald tells us that when Gov. Spottswood came to Virginia he at once revived the iron industry which had been begun ninety years before. In moving from one place to another a man would burn a house to get the nails, or if he sold the house, the nails it took to build the house must be estimated by a third person. Bishop Meade also tells us that after the Revolution one of the most

venerable houses of worship in South Farnham Parish was demolished in order to salvage the building materials.

Tobacco was not only the chief article of export, but also formed the principal currency of the colony, and acts for the establishment of public warehouses were passed, for the inspection of tobacco. In 1730 such warehouses were at Hobb's Hole, upon John Griffan's land; at Bowlers Ferry on Adam's land and at Laytons. In 1742 the number was increased and others were established on Piscataway Creek and one on Occupacia Creek on the land of James Garnett. These warehouses were for the inspection of tobacco and not any could be exported from

*\*Mrs. Newbill was president of the Essex County Historical Society, a charter founding member and a faithful contributing member of many years. She was the wife of Sydney Newbill and a daughter of Muscoe Garnett, both sheriffs of Essex, and a granddaughter of Judge Muscoe Garnett of "Ben Lomond," Essex County.*

the colony unless inspected at one of them. The inspectors were to deliver to the owner of the tobacco notes under their hands and seals setting forth the quantity and quality of the tobacco deposited by them, and these notes were to be used in all payments and allowed to circulate in the neighboring counties. "Special legislative precautions were taken to insure excellent construction of the casks to prevent fraud from over-thick staves and heading. The average weights of the tobacco casks increased with time, ranging from 500 to 1000 pounds, probably to minimize the tax which was imposed per hoghead rather than according to weight. When a landing was some distance from the warehouse, or rolling-house the hogheads were taken in carts or propelled from behind. In a later period, the cask was drawn over the ground by horses or oxen".

In 1744 an act was passed to prevent the inhabitants of Tappahannock from raising hogs at large in said town.

In 1755 an act recites that "Essex is suitable for raising sheep, and it is necessary to preserve them against the ravages of dogs, and no slave shall be allowed to carry a dog under penalty of ten lashes, nor shall more than two dogs be kept at any negro quarters in the county." But our ancestors were sportsmen, "and it is especially provided that servants shall not be hindered by the act from carrying hounds and other dogs for sport from place to place for their master's diversion."

Mr. Elliott Campbell has written in "The Caroline Progress" a very interesting account of what he calls "The Plagues."

"In 1728 a multitude of caterpillars spread over the country east of the Blue Ridge and threatened to destroy all plant life. Superstitious settlers believed that the Lord sent these pests to punish them for their wickedness, and instead of trying to protect their crops, rushed to houses of worship to pray.

"Governor Gooch, a deeply religious Presbyterian, proclaimed May 17, 1728, 'a day of fasting and humiliation to deprecate the angers of the Almighty and save ye fruits of ye earth from destruction.' Fortunately the House of Burgesses passed a law which forbade the exportation of 'Indian corn, wheat, peas and other grain to conserve the food supply and prevent starvation in the ensuing winter.'

"Destruction of plant life by the caterpillars paved the way for the second plague. Shortage of food in the forest caused famished deer to descend on the crops which more prudent planters strove to protect. These animals came in such great numbers that in many places it was impossible for the alarmed planters to drive them off. The only solution was to kill, and in a short time the woods adjacent to many homesteads were littered with carcasses.

"These carcasses brought on the third plague, the wolves which concentrated about the homesteads to enjoy feasts of newly killed meat. Unfortunately the wolves did not clean up the bodies of the dead deer and move on. Instead, they stayed and preyed on the settler's livestock and sometimes attacked his children and even older members of the family."

Order Book of 1692, page 158, shows that Essex County was paying for wolves' heads at that time, and again in O.B. 1708-1714, page 625 we find the order to kill the wolves. The House of Burgesses passed a law raising the bounty on wolf heads to 100 pounds of tobacco each.

It has been said that "Historians make men wise and the knowledge of their native country makes them patriotic." It is well then for us of the present day to look back to the times of our ancestors and by this retrospect learn gratitude for the benefits which we enjoy from their labors, their wisdom and their administration.

When Essex County was formed from old Rappahannock it contained what is now divided into thirteen separate counties. Spotsylvania was the first to be cut off in 1721, and according to "A Handbook of Virginia History," from that section has been carved Orange, Frederick, Augusta, Culpeper, Shenandoah, Madison, Warren, Rappahannock, Clark and Green. Essex gave as many counties to the State, as Virginia gave states to the union by the Northwest Territory. Then because of the great trouble of getting the tobacco to the inspection warehouses Caroline was formed on the heads of Essex, King & Queen and King William counties in 1727.

Now, we come to the confines of what is now Essex County, lying its whole northern length along the Rappahannock River, with King & Queen on the south only separated by the Dragon Run. Caroline bounds it on the west and Middlesex on the east. The county is divided into three Magisterial Districts: Rappahannock, Central and Occupacia; and is broken by three very important estuaries of the Rappahannock River; namely Piscataway, Hoskins and Mt. Landing Creeks. Smaller streams rise back up in the hills and very few large farms were not touched by them and the water power used to turn a grist mill. I suppose every one here present has at some time visited some one or more of the old mills and seen the fore-bay, the tumbling dam and the flood gates, as well as the large "over-shot" wheel which turns the big, heavy stones which crushed the grain.

Within the last forty or fifty years there were still about twelve or fifteen of these old mills being used in Essex. Beginning at the lower end of the county there was Farinholt's or Durham's Mill, Robinson's Mill near Bowler's (owned by Mr. Henry Robinson, whose wife was Miss Patty Gouldman); Smith and Wright's Mill (owned by Mr. William F. Smith and Mrs. Mary Ann Wright, widow of Dr. Edward Lawrence Wright); Philip's Mill (afterwards owned by Mr. Bob Ware and Mr. Bob Hutchinson); and Essex Mill, (owned by the Covingtons, Tribles and Hundleys). Mr. Jack Harper, one of the oldest men now living in Essex County, and one who has spent his entire life in the same locality, tells me that the three last named mills are the only ones in these parts built all three on the one same stream. When even a heavy rain would come, if the flood gates at the Essex Mill were not lifted the whole dam might be washed out.

By going to the third floor in the Essex Mill house, one may see on the rafter the date 1808. This is supposed to be the year in which the house was built. Mr. Harper also states that he was "always told" that all three of these mills, Smith and Wright's, Ware's and Hutchinson's, and the Essex Mill, were all built by the Cauthorne family. This was a large family and they owned many places in and around Dunnsville. It is also stated by another old gentleman, Mr. R. L. Pendleton, that because of the tide rising there that the Essex Mill had an "under-shot" wheel and turned to the left instead of the the right.

According to Mr. Willie Garnett in "Tidewater Tales," he says: "Going down a steep hill, we have before us the Essex Mill pond, a beautiful land-locked and forest-lined lake. Right where the flood gates now are there was once a cotton gin, and from these large brigs were loaded with cotton and tobacco for either foreign or distant domestic ports, going right down the mill creek into the Piscataway and thence to the broad Rappahannock River. Yet now (1927) one can scarcely paddle a sora skiff up that creek to the mill. Also on the Piscataway Creek just above Bohannons was a 'Bake Oven' where quantities of bread and other food was cooked. The old logs and rocks at this place could be seen not many years ago."

In Central District there was Wright's Mill on "Shelby," the home of Mr. Erasmus Wright. It was later known as Smoot's, now Kline's Mill. Other mills in Central District were Latane's and Scott's and Croxton's. At this last named there was also a saw mill run by water power. You know this place is not far from where the old "Upper Piscataway" church was located. Then there is Motley's Mill, where also a cotton gin was used and some parts of which still remain.

In Occupacia District was Bowman's Mill, once owned by some of the Jones family and called by their name, and also Spindle's Mill near the Caroline line. Mr. Richard Baylor of "Marl Bank" has given the following information about Baylor's Mill: "This mill was built by Robert Waring about 1820 on "Cockrell Shell" Creek, and was a three story brick building. There were four stones, two for beans and two for meal. There were other large brick buildings, a granary, a dwelling and a blacksmith and wheelwright shop. At the death of Robert Waring, the property was inherited by his daughter, the wife of Richard Baylor, and later by their son, Harry S. Baylor. The property was sold in 1937."

Hunter's Mill is located at Occupacia, or rather the Post Office was located at the mill, for without doubt these old grist mills where bread, the very staff of existence, was provided were important places; and there, too, the welfare of the nation was discussed and plans laid in the minds of men for the building of the future. At Hunter's Mill they used to hold political gatherings and have a fish fry.

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#### MINUTES OF THE SOCIETY

The Essex County Historical Society met in the Court House, Tappahannock, Virginia on July 15, 1984, at 3:00 p.m. with the president, Dr. Calvin N. Warfield, presiding. The reading of the minutes of the April meeting were dispensed with and Mrs. Wright, secretary, thanked the Hospitality Committee for the refreshments for our social gathering following the meeting in the Woman's Club House: Mrs. Emory L. Carlton and Mrs. J. M. Evans, co-chairmen, Mrs. Lewis Myers, Mrs. Calvin Warfield, Mrs. Robert Handly and Mrs. William A. Wright.

The corresponding secretary, Mrs. J. M. Evans, passed around the paper to record the number present.

Mr. Ludwell F. Smither gave the financial report, stating we had a balance on hand after all bills for bulletin and April meeting had been paid of \$929.94. He also stated that we now have five Life Memberships of \$100 each with which to start a savings account.

The president announced the nominating committee to bring in a slate of officers at the fall meeting: Mrs. Spottswood Taliaferro, Chariman; Mr. Robert T. Ryland and Mr. Charles Warner.

Mr. Charles W. H. Warner, Publicity Chairman, announced a meeting of interested parties on July 23, at 7:30 p.m. at the Rappahannock Community College in Warsaw. Everyone interested in helping the college, which is the only institution of higher learning in the area, raise money for ten scholarships of \$900.00 each should come to this meeting. Mr. Hill Wellford also announced that the Friends of the College are sponsoring sales of a Seafood Cookbook which can be bought at several places in Tappahannock.

Mr. James Slaughter, County Historian, announced that the County History is going into final stages and should go to the printer before the end of August. He said

he could still use more agricultural photos and asked for volunteers to help proofread the manuscript. He also stated that 538 books had been ordered and he hoped any who wanted copies would get their order in before August 1 as there would probably be very few extra copies for purchase later.

Dr. Warfield announced that a new committee was being formed and appointed, Mrs. John R. Haile as Chairman Pro Tem, on genealogical research.

Next was a report from Mr. Everett F. Johnston, representative from the Historical Society to the committee formed by the Chamber of Commerce to discuss and plan the building of a Community Center on the grounds offered by the Tidewater Memorial Hospital Foundation of approximately 15 acres. There is a great deal of planning, etc. to go into this project and Mr. Johnston asked for another volunteer to help him.

Mr. Wellford introduced Mr. Robert Hastings, Essex County Farm Agent, who told us about the 4-H Educational Center to be built and improved in Jamestown. These facilities would be used by many other organizations as well. Essex County's share is \$9,000.00 which the 4-H groups and others are attempting to raise. Mr. Johnston passed out brochures showing this project.

Dr. Warfield then turned the meeting over to our vice-president and program chairman, Mr. Hill B. Wellford, who introduced our speaker, Dr. Edward D. C. Campbell. Dr. Campbell graduated from V. P. I. and received his doctorate from the University of South Carolina. He was former Director of the Civil War Memorial Museum in Richmond and is now Director of Development for the Virginia Historical Society. Dr. Campbell talked about the various homes used by the Virginia Historical Society until they acquired their present building, Battle Abbey, to house the millions of items, documents, books, etc. accumulated over the years. He showed a number of interesting slides of "Bits & Pieces, Items from the Collection." Most interesting to us locally were slides of old post cards of Essex and surrounding areas.

Following Dr. Campbell's interesting and enlightening talk we adjourned to the Woman's Club for delicious refreshments and a delightful social hour.

The Essex County Historical Society met at 3:00 p.m. October 21, 1984 at Rappahannock Church, Dunnsville, with our president, Dr. Calvin N. Warfield, presiding. The minutes of the July meeting were read and approved. The secretary, Mrs. Wright, read a post card from Miss Helen Phillips, who is a member and is now in Westminister-Canterbury Personal Health Care Unit, stating how she would miss being present to hear the Program on Steamboats on the Rappahannock because she had always loved them so much.

Mrs. Wright also read the following letter from one of our members who lives far away now.

"Dear Anne,

Thank you for the Historical Society's latest publication and the reminder of my dues. Enclosed you will find my check for life membership. Although I am unable to attend your meetings, I am very interested in what you are doing and thoroughly enjoy your publications. I have a deep sense of appreciation and affection for some of your members for the influence they have had on my life. Robert Temple Ryland was my high school principal and algebra teacher. I recall the day he took me to Mary Washington College and introduced me to Dr. Combs, President of the College and Mrs. Bushnell, the Dean of Women. I deeply appreciate his help in my enrollment in Mary Washington.

Betty Montague Hicks taught me to love Virginia History and helped instill in me a great sense of patriotism. It was this patriotism that led me to volunteer to serve in the Naval Reserves (WAVES) in October 1942—the first woman from my Congressional District. While serving in the Navy Department in Washington, I met a wonderful man from Montana which led to a happy marriage and a wonderful family. Elva Powers has been a dear friend and neighbor. She was a substitute teacher for her Aunt Susie Powers when I was in first and second grade. Susie Powers also taught my mother. Her life was dedicated to teaching. It was not until after her retirement at 60+ that she married Mr. Hunter who had loved her for many years.

Reading of the Tribble Family in the latest publication brought back memories. Waring Tribble and Mrs. Ashby Atkinson were my first bosses and supervisors in the Farm Security Administration Office. They were good and patient bosses and my experience working under the National Youth Administration for a few months in their office was quite valuable. Memories of teachers and friends at Lloyds High School, Upper Essex Church and all of Essex County are very dear."

Sincerely,  
Viola Udelhoven (Mrs. Martin)  
Box 117, Winifred, MT 59489

Following the treasurer's report of a balance on hand after expenses of July meeting of \$1095.33 which includes \$600.00 for six life memberships, Mrs. Wright presented three (3) constitutional amendments which had to be adopted at a regular meeting of the Society. These amendments were adopted to comply with the Internal Revenue Code so that our organization could be exempt and get an exempt number so that we can place our life membership dues in an interest-bearing Time Deposit Certificate or a Savings Account, so that the Society will have the interest to reinvest or to meet regular expenses when necessary.

Mrs. Robert L. Ellis, membership chairman, announced several new members since our July meeting: Mr. and Mrs. Paul S. Tribble, Sr., Mrs. Mary Montsinger, Mrs. Susan Godman Rager and Mrs. Mae Moore. The Nominations Committee with Mrs. Spottswood Taliaferro, Chairman, Mr. Robert Temple Ryland, and Mr. Charles Warner presented a slate of officers for the next two years: Mr. Hill B. Wellford, President; Mr. Carroll Garnett, Vice-President and Chairman of Programs; Mr. Ludwell Smither, Treasurer; and Mrs. William A. Wright, Secretary. There being no nominations from the floor, the slate was elected unanimously.

There being no further committee reports, the meeting was turned over to Mr. Wellford, Vice-President, who introduced Mr. Carroll Garnett, Vice-President elect, who introduced our speaker, Mr. William J. Bray, Jr. of Chesterfield. Mr. Bray is a history teacher at Monican High School and has made an in-depth study of steam-

boats. He attended Lynchburg College and received his Master's Degree at East Carolina. While at Lynchburg College he knew Dr. J. T. T. Hundley who was associated with Rappahannock Church as well as the College for most of his life, so it is very appropo that Mr. Bray is our speaker here today. He talked and showed slides of the many steamboats on the Rappahannock River from 1821 when the Petersburg, the first of its kind, sailed up to Fredericksburg from Old Point on pleasure excursions. He had slides of pictures of many of these steamboats and spoke of the different steamship lines which operated on the Rappahannock between Norfolk and Baltimore. He talked of the effect on shipping of products from the area by boat to market and of their effect on the social life of the community. He told of the Anne Arundel, captained by John D. Davis, which made its last trip to Fredericksburg for nostalgia's sake on September 11, 1937. She carried numerous passengers who had been specially invited by Captain Davis to share in this last hurrah of the era of steam.

Following this very interesting address the president thanked Mrs. James Catesby Ware and Mrs. Robert Ware, Co-hostesses, and Mrs. Coty Dowell, Mrs. Lib Smither, and Mrs. Louise Fleming for the delicious refreshments enjoyed by all in the Parish Hall of Rappahannock.

Anne T. Wright, *Secretary*

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## Officers of the Society

*President* . . . . . Calvin N. Warfield  
*Vice President* . . . . . Hill B. Wellford  
*Secretary* . . . . . Mrs. William A. Wright  
*Treasurer* . . . . . Ludwell Smither

### PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Charles W. H. Warner, *Chairman*;  
Mrs. William A. Wright, Mrs. J.M. Evans, James Slaughter

### HISTORICAL MATERIALS COMMITTEE

James Slaughter, *Chairman*

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*Meetings are held quarterly in the Essex Court House, or in an historic home or church of the County. Dues are \$5.00 per year. For copies of publications send \$2.00 to Mrs. J. M. Evans, Box 8, Tappahannock, Virginia 22560.*

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