The Poor of Essex County
Part 2: After the War
By Suzanne P. Derieux and Wesley E. Pippenger

After much argument and debate, Virginia seceded from the Union in April 1861, and joined with the newly formed Confederate States of America. In May all civil and military officials living within the state were released of their obligations to support the Union, and on 19 June 1861, Virginia ratified the new Constitution of the C.S.A.

In Essex war fever ran high, and the county ultimately furnished five companies to the 55th Regiment, and one company to the 9th Cavalry. Enlistments in these units began in May 1861, and the county ordered uniforms and arms for them, and required the stockpiling of munitions. The county also passed a bond resolution to raise money to support the wives and children of service men. With almost all of the county’s money and energy poured into the Confederacy, very little was left for anything else.

The poor house, however, was still under the control of the Trustees of the Poor, and they still had control of the Glebe funds. With this money, they could continue to support the poor house, and keep what was a hard life from becoming impossible. In early 1861, Samuel T. Davis was paid $15.75 by the trustees for repairing seven cabins, and $20 for moving and rebuilding one cabin. In June, Dr. Thomas C. Gordon acknowledged receipt from E.M. Ware for $50, as being half a year’s salary for his medical services at the poor house.¹

The Courts of the county only met twice between March 1863 and November 1865, so there are no references to the poor house or any other county business. Taxes were more important than ever, and the tax assessment on Howard Grove for 1859 was $13.18. This was based on 471 acres of land, valued at $3,297, and buildings valued at $1000.00, at 40 cents/dollar. In 1862 the tax rate was 60 cents, and in 1863, $1.00. There are no tax records for 1864 or 1865, but in 1866 the tax rate for the impoverished county was 14 cents/dollar.

In May 1865 President Andrew Johnson recognized Governor Francis J. Peirpont, who had been elected by the Wheeling (West) Virginia Convention in June 1861. Peirpont served until 1868, when Henry H. Wells took office and governed Virginia as Military District # 1 (under Union occupation), until 20 Sept.1869. A new state constitution was written and submitted to voters in Sept 1869. The rule of the Gentlemen Justices, who had governed every county in Virginia since the early days of the Colony, was ended. The last sitting of the Justices in Essex was in March 1870, with Henry A. Wilson, Emanuel Coltrider and William Breedlove. From then on each district in a county would elect a supervisor, and these supervisors would form the governing board.

¹ Business papers of Edward Macon Ware, Dunsville, Va., in possession of Mrs. Neil Ware of Bellevue.
A state election was held in May of 1870, and in Essex, Dr. William H. Robinson (Rappahannock), Dr. Henry Gresham (Central), and Robert P. Baylor (Occapia) were elected as the first supervisors, taking office in September. Baylor was ill 2, and resigned in June 1871, replaced by Benjamin L. Sale.

Among other jobs, the new Board was required to take charge of the poor house, and to discharge the duties formerly done by the trustees. They had to hire a clerk to take the place of the Secretary of the Trustees to keep the minutes and codify all by-laws and ordinances as necessary. They also took control of the Glebe fund by an Act of General Assembly, approved in February 1872. William A. Baynham, receiver of the bonds, script or certificates of state or other stocks that belonged to the Glebe fund of St. Anne's Parish, and Robert P.W. Fauntleroy, receiver of the same for South Farnham Parish, were ordered to deliver the monies and stocks to the county treasurer to hold subject to the order and control of the Board of Supervisors. Messrs. Baynham and Fauntleroy were also ordered to settle an account of their transactions before James M. Matthews, Commissioner of Accounts for the court, and report the same with any other pertinent matters to the court.3 The county Treasurer, Richard Rowzie, was to receive all monies and stocks of the Glebe fund and place them in the hands of Isaac, Taylor & Williams Investments, of Richmond.

In a meeting of the Board at Howard Grove on 3 August 1872, the Board confirmed Thomas Boughan, elected in November 1871, as Superintendent of the Poor, and set his salary as $200.00 per year. At the same time they set the rent of the dwelling, barns, garden, and fields, formerly given gratis to the Superintendent, at $100.00 per year, to be taken out of his salary. There were five Superintendents between 1871-1920; Thomas Boughan (1871-1875), Booker Garnett (1875-1884), Henry S. Rouzie (1884-1888), John T. Boughan (1888-1896) John G. Boughan (1896-1920). Each district would continue to elect its own overseer, who would look after the poor in his district, and move them to the poor house if necessary.

There was a Physician for the poor house, whose salary was set at $100.00/year. John T. Boughan held this office from 1870-1895, and at his death in 1896, various doctors served, including E.L.W. Ferry, William J. Haile, William Taliaferro, and H.B. Bristow.

In 1871 the Board ordered repairs to the dwelling, barns, and six cabins, and ordered the building of five more cabins, the jobs to go to the lowest bidder. The number of the poor in the county had more than doubled, because of the influx of freedmen. No longer under the care of owners, many had no home, no income, and nowhere to go. In 1873 Joseph Mann was paid $156.00 for building the new cabins; in 1885 D.P. Motley built 3 more for $49.50 apiece, each
to be 16' wide x18' long, with an 8' (roof) pitch, with 2 floors, the first floor to be 1" thick...the roof to be covered with good pine slabs...each house to have one 6 light window with 8"x10" panes to slide...good mud chimneys to project 2' above the roof, with stone hearths and backs, 2 doors 3'x6' with 3 battens...open steps to go upstairs, a window upstairs with a wood shutter...the logs to be cut on the poor house farm of yellow pine...the bottom logs to be laid on rocks well put in the ground...the logs to be well chinked and daubed with clay and lime...
In a January 1873 meeting of the Board, bylaws conforming to the new Code of Virginia were introduced

The superintendent of the poor...shall have charge of the county poor house or place of general reception of the poor...where there is none, he shall...provide suitable places for the keeping of the poor of his county, by renting or leasing... He shall receive...such paupers as may be sent to him, and provide and care for said paupers in the manner provided for by law, and shall, when in his opinion it is unnecessary for any pauper to remain longer...discharge him therefrom. He is to make a report to the Board once a year...is to distribute rations and furnish meal and bacon...to oversee cleanliness...to detail nurses if necessary...to furnish impediments of employment...to lay off land to be cultivated...to make sure the children attended school.

Two acres were laid off for the use of the residents, one half planted in cotton, one half in vegetables. Residents were also allowed to pen one hog, and could keep as many as six chickens per family. The Superintendent was not to allow visitors to stay more than one day, and visitors could take nothing away with them. Any woman resident found guilty of illicit intercourse was to be expelled, although no such provision existed for men.

2 Robert P. Baylor died in March 1872 of consumption, age 35.
Numbers remained fairly constant through the end of the century; staying between 40-60 persons living at Howard Grove. After 1900 there came a change, with the county letting people board at private homes, or stay in their own homes, but paying their accounts at stores. Numbers began to drop, and by 1912, there were only 30 people living at the poor house, and 17 more were furnished supplies on the county funds. By 1914, there was no one living at the poor house, but 55 persons drawing provisions from the county.

Howard Grove continued to be used to grow timber, and for a time in the 1920's, was loaned to the Virginia fish and Game Commission as a wildlife preserve. The 2-story frame dwelling there was still insured for $800, although the cabins were allowed to fall in.

By the 1930's, the continuing depression made the counties’ support of the poor house very difficult, while the growing numbers of unemployed and destitute made this support even more necessary. In 1933 the Board wrote “whereas the appropriation and demands for care and support of the poor are steadily increasing...it is ordered that the Clerk communicate with the Virginia Director of Public Welfare...with a view to devise ways and means for handling the situation in the most beneficial manner...”\(^5\) The use of a facility like Howard Grove was no longer the best option, since housing and full support cost the county more than direct payments. Essex continued to pay out stipends, and allowed draws on local merchants to persons in each district until 1938. They also continued to pay for coffins and burials if the pauper had no funds or estate, although no burials took place at the poor house after about 1920. With the passage of the Social Security Act in Aug 1935, the use of county poor farms and stipends was ended.

In 1935 Howard Grove farm was rented to Frank Brooks for $5.00 a month. His daughter Clara E. Brooks Long writes

Howard Grove was 9/10 of a mile off the road...when you arrived at the house you would be at the front end...the back yard was where the garden was...there was a small grove of trees there, and behind them, the barn. There was a door at the front end of the house into the basement kitchen, which had a brick floor...the cellar floor was dirt. At the other end of the kitchen was a flight if stairs that led to the first floor hallway. There were two doors, front and back, and another flight of stairs to the second floor with the bedrooms. On the right of the hallway was a bedroom, and through that another small room, which had a door to the back porch. To the left of the main hall was a short flight of stairs that led to two rooms on a different level. There was another flight of stairs that led to a large attic. The source of water was a spring located down a hill a good distance from the house...the water ran from the earth into a large wooden box, where jars of milk were kept cold...there was a large hole off from the house that was called the Ice House. Back in the woods to the right of the driveway, there was a small house...the floor was gone, but the joists were there...there were newspapers on the wall to keep out the wind and cold.

DEATHS OF PAUPERS AND PAYMENTS

The following names were found either in the records of the Board of Supervisors, or in the Essex County Death Register. Vouchers were submitted to the county for making a coffin or burying a body. The date given is the date of the invoice or payment. Due to space restrictions, only the names are listed here. For a full account, please see S.P. Derieux at the Courthouse. This list is not complete.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviations Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– No data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) Colored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c/o child of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d/o daughter of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB Free Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g/o granddaughter of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i/o infant of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s/o son of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^4\) Board of Supervisors records, 1914. Policy 1090617 with Virginia Fire & Marine Insurance Co., Richmond, Va., for the dwelling situated on the poor house land about 6 miles from Tappahannock, Va.

\(^5\) Supervisor’s Order Book 3: 282.
The care of the poor in Virginia, at first a Church function, then a County necessity, was turned over to the Federal Government.

**About the Authors**

**Suzanne P. Derieux** is a recognized records specialist for Essex County. She is president of the Essex County Museum and Historical Society and resides in Tappahannock, Virginia. **Wesley E. Pippenger** is past president of the Virginia Genealogical Society and author of many publications on Virginia records including the 10-volume *Index to Virginia Estates, 1800-1865*, and two volumes on Essex County newspapers. He maintains a personal library and archives at his residence in Tappahannock, Virginia.

---

**Cranberry Walnut Oatmeal Cookies**

(serve with hot cocoa, coffee, or tea)

**Ingredients**

- Crisco® Original No-Stick Cooking Spray
- 3/4 cup Crisco® Butter Shortening OR 3/4 Crisco® Butter Shortening Sticks
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup Pillsbury BEST® All Purpose Flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 3/4 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

**Directions**

1. HEAT oven to 350 degrees F. Coat baking sheets with no-stick cooking spray.


3. BAKE 10 to 12 minutes or until light brown. Cool on baking sheets 2 minutes. Place on cooling rack to cool completely.

Reprinted from [http://www.foodnetwork.com](http://www.foodnetwork.com)
Seasons Greetings
TO OUR MEMBERS

Visit the ECMHS Gift Shop to get $5.00 OFF

(valid thru Jan 1, 2012)

Wishing you a joyous holiday
and a happy new year!

Executive Committee
President Suzanne Derieux
1st Vice President Tommy Blackwell
2nd Vice President Bill Croxton
Secretary Priscilla Vaughan
Treasurer Ron Geiger
Public Relations Kia Ware
Archivist/Research Coordinator Anne Jackson
Educational Programs Director Joan Moore

Board of Directors
Regina Blagmon Lloyd Huckstep
David Broad Joe Johnston
Kevin Dolan Wes Pippenger
Harry Gladding Howard Reisinger
Gordon Harrower Louise Velletri

*The Board of Directors also includes all members of the Executive Committee.

Museum Staff
Curator/Collection Management David Jett
Administrative Assistant Kelly LaFollette

Editor: C. H. Harris

December 31, 2011 Annual Fund Drive Closes
All donations are greatly appreciated. For more information, please visit the ‘Donations’ page on our web site www.essexmuseum.org, stop by or call the museum at 804-443-4690, or mail to P. O. Box 404, Tappahannock, VA 22560.

Essex County Museum Hours
10 am-3 pm on M, T, Th, F, S
Admission is always free

Essex County Museum & Historical Society
Post Office Box 404
Tappahannock, Virginia 22560