

SPFI NEWSLETTER

September/October 2004

"The Past Builds the Future"

Volume 17, Issue 4

Vince and Sheila Melton, Merl Witt

Mrs. Carolyn Elstner

Christine Walsh, Mrs. Hallie Rowley
Sale, Donna Chasen

SPFI HOLDS ANNUAL PRESERVATION AWARDS AND FAMILY PICNIC AT SNOW HILL

On Sunday, September 12, under a warm sun and between passing hurricanes, SPFI members and guests met on the grounds of Snow Hill Farm, hosted by owners Sheila and Vince Melton. After Carroll Hayden's discussion of Snow Hill Farm's history and John LeFebre's update on the Spotsylvania Jail (1855) rehabilitation project, contributions to preservation were recognized. SPFI President, Helen Springer, presented an Award of Excellence in Rehabilitation to Mr. and Mrs. Merlyn Witt for exterior repair, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the "Salem" Dairy Barn as stables and Awards of Commendation went to Mrs. Carolyn Elstner for continuing preservation effort at "Ellwood," to Mr. and Mrs. Walter Gentry for stewardship of the 1781-1838 Courthouse Lot Marker Stones and for donating them to Spotsylvania County for preservation, to Dr. Michael P. Stevens for continuing effort in support of battlefield preservation, to Mrs. Christine Walsh for service to SPFI as a Board member and Secretary, and to Mr. John Taylor for professionalism as a Planner and for support of cultural resources while encouraging citizens to "be community minded" in land use planning. Christine Walsh, SPFI Oral History Project Leader, presented an Award of Commendation to Mrs. Hallie Rowley Sale for her participation in the SPFI Oral History program.

WALNUT GROVE NAMED TO NATIONAL REGISTER

Walnut Grove in Spotsylvania, owned by SPFI members Dr. and Mrs. William Chaddock, was named to the list effective August 20, 2004. Walnut Grove is a Greek Revival-style house situated on a ridge of rolling farmland in southwestern Spotsylvania County. This imposing dwelling was constructed on property purchased by Jonathan Johnson II in 1829 and most likely built by William A. Jennings, a master builder of Greek Revival homes in this region from 1830 to 1850. The front elevation of the house is five bays in width on a raised brick basement. The most distinct Greek Revival-

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THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION VICTORY IN A DECADE

The Civil War Preservation Trust has announced a plan that will preserve 140 acres of battlefield land on the eastern half of the Mullins Farm. The deal was the result of an agreement between the Civil War Preservation Trust, Tricord Homes, and Spotsylvania County. According to Jim Campi, CWPT Policy and Communications Director, the Mullins Farm deal shows that a win-win compromise at the Mullins Farm was not only possible, but preferable. All that was needed to

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ADVOCACY REPORT

Fire/Rescue Station #1: At its Sept. 10, 2004 meeting, the Board of Supervisors voted to relocate Fire/Rescue Station # 1 on the 11.22 acre site purchased in June 2003. No comment was made about what plans are for the remainder of the parcel but the DJG architect did mention the site's desirability for future expansion. SPFI members have joined other preservation interests since Aug. 2003, including the Board of the Confederate Cemetery and residents of Courthouse Commons, in opposing the site due to its size and location at the primary entrance to the Spotsylvania Courthouse National Register District. We advocated placement on other parcels or expansion where Fire Station # 1 is now located on American Legion Drive. The supervisors chose option "B" which places the building perpendicular to Rt. 208 and thus has the six equipment bays facing Commons Blvd. No proposed designs are available at this time.

Comp Plan Amendment: On August 2, 2004, at a joint meeting of the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission, SPFI spoke in favor of the Comprehensive Plan amendment to remove the Mullins Farm (Ashley Farm) and other parcels from the Primary Settlement District. Our letter stated that "...the Foundation opposed ...the commercial rezoning in 1999 and the expansion of the PSD further west as part of the 2002 Comp. Plan revision. Intentionally incorporating this road into a growth planning district fails to recognize its historic significance...and the tourism potential." With the recent proposal to purchase 140 acres of battlefield land from the Farm, the PSD proposal was tabled.

Dickinson Tract: At a August 18, 2004 Planning Commission meeting,

Walnut Grove

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style feature is the raised entry porch; it has four square Tuscan columns supporting a flat roof and connected by the original balustrades. This entryway is detailed with elaborately carved sidelights and a leaded-tracery transom. Original wooden shutters are present on the windows of the raised basement and the first floor. The floor plan of the home is L-shaped. A Tuscan columned rear porch, now screened, completes the northwest side. The house features three brick interior-end chimneys. On the first floor are twelve-foot-high ceilings, eleven-inch molded pine baseboards, crossette molded door trim, raised panel doors with nickel-plated hardware, and the original heart pine floors. The window surrounds in the main parlor have fluted pilasters and feather-painted wainscoting. The baseboards have the original Sienna pattern faux marbling. The carved pine mantels also display fluted pilasters, faux marbleized and/or grain-painted. Similar detailing is present in the dining room. The central hall contains an open stringer staircase with massive turned walnut newel posts. A less formal parlor comprises the rear ell with impressive wide pine wainscoting. It has been converted to a kitchen, preserving most of its original woodwork. Upstairs are three bedrooms of original dimensions and condition. Today Walnut Grove appears much as it did in the mid-nineteenth century. The old smokehouse remains, as does the stone fireplace of the 18th-century Coleman house that preceded Walnut Grove and once served as its kitchen. The Bond house, an 18th-century structure, moved from Louisa County, has been placed on the site of a destroyed Walnut Grove dependency. Its restoration has received an award from the Spotsylvania Preservation Foundation and is used as a bed and breakfast. Also on the property are an English garden, vegetable gardens, orchards, a vineyard and a Johnson family cemetery. The grounds and surrounding scenery, with views of the

Blue Ridge Mountains to the west, add greatly to the feeling of elegance that once embodied this fine home.

In their application for addition to the National Register, Dr. and Mrs. Chaddock acknowledged contributions by Mrs. Wanda Parrish, Senior Planner of the Spotsylvania County Historic Preservation Commission, for her efforts and foresight in contracting the services of EHT Traceries, of Washington, D.C. to evaluate Spotsylvania County, Virginia, properties, including Walnut Grove, potentially eligible for nomination as Virginia Landmarks and National Register of Historic Places designations. The Chadducks also recognized contributions by Mrs. Brenda Schulte, who conducted research on Walnut Grove and prepared the Preliminary Information Form while a student of Historic Preservation at Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

For those interested in more information about Spotsylvania historic properties, an excellent source is the website: www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/VA/spotsylvania/state.html

WALNUT GROVE
Ellwood

HISTORIC COURTHOUSE: NEW ROOF

The historic Spotsylvania County Courthouse now has a new EcoStar synthetic slate roof that was installed during August. The material is light in weight and is approved by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) as a substitute material for historic structures when real slate can not be used. Copper snow guards and chimney flashing were used.

The Courthouse, the fourth for Spotsylvania County, was built in this location in 1839. In 1870 there were major repairs from the Civil War and in 1900 the 1839 building was declared unsafe. The current structure was rebuilt and completed in 1901 using an enlarged design and salvaging only the four Doric columns from the front portico. The brick was changed from red to cream color.

Early pictures, none close-up, of the building suggest slate was the original roofing material and oral history from relatives of county residents suggested slate also, but written documentation was not found. When it became known that the county needed to replace the mid-20th century composition shingles, SPFI members asked that research be done and that the county consult with the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The HPC concluded that faux slate could be used on the courthouse roof but that 20th century shingles were appropriate for the 1964 annex.

The county plans to paint the columns and to repair the copper gutter system soon.

Battlefield Preservation (Continued from page 1)
realize such a compromise were local officials and a community-minded developer with similar visions.

SPFI was one of 12 national and local member organizations of the Coalition to Save Chancellorsville Battlefield. This has been a long awaited announcement. Jim Lighthizer, President of Civil War Preservation Trust, calls saving the 140 acres of hallowed ground at the Mullins Farm, including the area of First Day fighting from the Battle of Chancellorsville, May 1863, a significant victory. And this is what kept grassroots volunteers of the Coalition to Save Chancellorsville Battlefields engaged for the last 2 years! The purchase price is \$ 3 million.

While some said it could not be done, preservationists believed it could! The agreement with Tricord, Inc. includes the 55 acres that were rezoned to commercial in 1999. Spotsylvanians are grateful for this tremendously generous CWPT contribution of saving battlefield lands for future generations. The plans include a 1000 ft. buffer from Lick Run east towards Chancellor elementary school. Spotsylvania County, represented by Courtland Supervisor Bob Hagan, deserves thanks for sustained effort in helping reach this agreement with Tricord, Inc and CWPT.

For details and current information go to: www.Chancellorsville.org and if you wish to donate to CWPT to support purchase of the battlefield land, please send contributions to:

Civil War Preservation Trust
{For: Mullins Farm Land}
1331 H Street, Suite 101
Washington, D.C. 20005
{Write Mullins Farm on the check }

SPFI opposed the Silver Cos. request to remove approx. 319 acres known as the **Dickinson Tract** from Rural Development to PSD in order to connect to public utilities. If approved this would make a 'leap-frog' land use pattern along Gordon Road with this parcel that adjoins the Spotsylvania Courthouse Battlefield lands. SPFI felt that cultural resources were not being properly protected and the buffer must be increased to protect the viewshed. It would also blur the lines for water/sewer expansion which is now supposed to be in the PSD.

The 'Campus Plan:' The county's proposed government center expansion, for services up to the year 2020, was shown to the public for the first time on September 2, 2004. At least two more courtrooms will be needed as well as thousands more square feet of office space plus parking for employees and court staff. The design features a northern and southern area with grid streets and encourages walking. The test will come in the design process and development of architectural features. How will the expansion impact the historic village and the two historic districts? SPFI will be writing recommendations to the county after collecting comments from members and our Board. To have your comments included, please contact Caroline Hayden (shchayden@aol.com) (898-6626) and state your preferences for this expansion. Information about the plan is to be posted on the county website, or call the County Administrator's office (582-7010) to inquire.

The Witt's barn, before and after repair, with some painting remaining.



**SPOTSYLVANIA
COURTHOUSE**

Spotsylvania Preservation Foundation

www.spfi.org

The Spotsylvania Jail (1855)

P. O. Box 1875

Spotsylvania, VA 22553

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF SPFI?

PLEASE FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING Name Address City State ZIP/Postal Code	\$15.00 Individual/Senior Citizen Family \$25.00 Family \$50.00 Business \$350.00 Individual Lifetime \$500.00 Family Lifetime
	Send to: SPFI <i>The Spotsylvania Jail (1855)</i> P. O. Box 1875 Spotsylvania, VA 22553

THOMPSON W. STERNE

SPFI member Thompson W. Sterne of Falmouth passed away July 9, 2004. Mr. Sterne was co-owner of Sterne Brothers Truck Body and Equipment Co. He was active in the Stafford County community as a member of First Christian Church, the Stafford County Road Viewing Committee for 45 years and the Falmouth Volunteer Fire Dept. as well as serving as secretary of the Stafford County Electoral Board. He leaves his wife, Joyce W. Sterns and two sons. SPFI extends sincere sympathy to the Sterne Family.

**New Memberships
and Renewals:**

Don and Linda Normand
S. John Kaldahl
Joyce Sterne
Ora Seay
Jane Seaman

THANK YOU!

**TREASURER'S REPORT
AS OF AUGUST 3, 2004:**

GENERAL FUND:	\$ 4,035.62
JAIL FUND:	\$ 8,187.27
SCHOLARSHIP FUND:	\$ <u>2,506.38</u>
GRAND TOTAL:	\$14,729.27

Bob Kurtinitis, Treasurer

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