

# CHESTER

# GAP

*At the top of Rappahannock, a 'world unto itself'*



RAPPAHANNOCK PLACES



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**Sisters Jesse Wines and Mattie Frazier,** whose family has lived in Chester Gap for generations.

PHOTOS BY LUKE CHRISTOPHER FOR FOOTHILLS FORUM

**Densely populated mountain village occupies niche in county**

**BY BOB HURLEY | For Foothills Forum**

**I**t is the most densely populated village in Rappahannock County. It has its own voting precinct. It adjoins Shenandoah National Park and is home to the headwaters of the Rappahannock River. At 1,670 feet it has the highest elevation of the county's villages, thereby experiencing its own harsher weather. See **THE GAP**, Page 16

## THE GAP

From Page 1

It has more than 800 residents and about 300 homes. But with no shops or stores, and just one road in and out, chances are residents who live elsewhere haven't spent much time in this corner of the county.

Chester Gap – or “The Gap,” as many residents call it – snuggles up to the mountains where the boundaries of Rappahannock, Warren, and Fauquier counties meet. Its main thoroughfare, Chester Gap Road, runs from U.S. Route 522 west to a dead end at a Shenandoah National Park (SNP) trailhead.

Newer residents and those whose families date back generations love the place. Housing is more affordable, they say; neighbors look out for each other; and access to services like groceries, medical care, restaurants, and entertainment, including a movie theater and bowling alley, are in Front Royal, just five miles down the north side of the mountain.

Trey Williams, with his wife Tiffany Matthews and two daughters, moved to a house on Skyway Lane in 2017. “We looked to purchase a place in the area for about three years,” he said. “We were looking for an area that we liked, had good schools, and a home we could afford. Finding that trifecta was difficult.”

Tiffany, who serves on Rappahannock's nonprofit Family Futures board and advises the county social services department, added: “One of the benefits of living here is you have the option to go to close-by Front Royal for services, but also participate in school and social activities in Rappahannock.”

### A key Civil War throughway to orchard powerhouse

Little has been written about the history of Chester Gap. Once inhabited by the Manahoacs, a Native American tribe, the village's European settlement dates to the mid 1700s when Thomas Chester purchased land on the western edge of what now is the village. Chester, who began a ferry across the Shenandoah River near Riverton in the 1730s, was considered a founding father of Front Royal.

Over the years, a road was built from the ferry along current Route 522 to what was then known as “Chester's Gap,” and eventually into Rappahannock County. An old highway toll house that stood along Route 522 near the top of the mountain was moved in 1995 to a private property in nearby Huntly.

During the Civil War, Union and Confederate armies fought for control of gaps in the Blue Ridge Mountains that led into and out of the strategically important Shenandoah Valley. Chester Gap was a key access point. During the war, soldiers from both sides camped in the area.

The first notable use of the pass was in July 1862, when Gen. Nathaniel Banks' corps of the Union Army of Virginia marched from Winchester through



PHOTOS BY LUKE CHRISTOPHER FOR FOOTHILLS FORUM



Chester Gap en route to its monthlong occupation of Rappahannock County.

At the time, Annie Gardner, who lived just below Chester Gap near Front Royal, observed in her diary:

*July 5, 1862:* “Cavalry went over toward Flint Hill this morning early, been coming back in small companies all the morning, have heard no news from Front Royal, suppose no fighting there as the Yankees look as consequential as ever.”

*July 7, 1862:* “Yesterday they (Union troops) drank up all the milk in the spring house, and took some of Pa's hay this morning, they have been all over the yard, in the spring house, in the meadow, up the Cherrie trees, almost broke them to the ground...”

Almost a year later, in June of 1863, more than half of Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia passed through Chester Gap on its way north to the Battle of Gettysburg. A few weeks later, after the Confederate forces lost

that battle, Lee's army retreated through the gap. Union forces tried to block Lee's army on the Rappahannock County side of the pass, but were pushed back by Confederates in a 26-hour skirmish on July 21-22.

Longtime residents remember old family stories of subsistence farming, logging, and blacksmithing. Two large families, the Williams, and the Wines, migrated to Chester Gap in the mid-1800s and many of their descendants still live in the village. At one time, there were so many members of the Williams family living in the area, the community became two settlements: Chester Gap and Williamsburg.

Big apple orchards were planted in the early 1900s, most notably by the

#### CHRIS UBBEN

A descendant of the Wines family, he represents the area on the school board and is a deputy sheriff.



#### RONNIE MORRIS

His Williams family lineage goes back five generations.

#### MERRITT GREELEY

Pictured at right, he served as the first postmaster. His general store, below, housed the post office. Greeley is standing with Kerry Williams, father of twins Mattie Frazier and Jesse Wines.



Wood and North families. The Wood orchard, near the end of Waterfall Road in the old Chester's Gap, provided seasonal work for many locals. Covering almost 1,000 acres, it had its own store, private homes, and numerous storage and processing facilities.

Ronnie Morris, whose Williams family lineage goes back five generations, said that those who didn't work in the orchards found jobs in Front Royal. “A lot of folks worked in Front Royal at the old American Viscose Corp. manufacturing plant or the horse breeding remount depot run by the U.S. Army,” he said. “Most everybody had several acres for a garden and a few animals like hogs and cows.”

Chris Ubben, a descendant of the Wines family, represents the area on the Rappahannock County School Board and is a deputy sheriff. He recalled: “It was a little slice of Appalachia up there back in the day. It was a small, tight-knit community and folks made do with what little they had.”

### A community leader from 'The Gap' paves way for county zoning laws

By the mid-20th century, Merritt Greeley, a resident of Front Royal, purchased land around what was then the Williamsburg area. Originally from Iowa, Greeley was a great, great grandson of Horace Greeley, founder and editor of the New-York Tribune newspaper, an ardent abolitionist and an organizer of the Republican Party.

“He got the community together,” said Morris. “Mr. Greeley built a

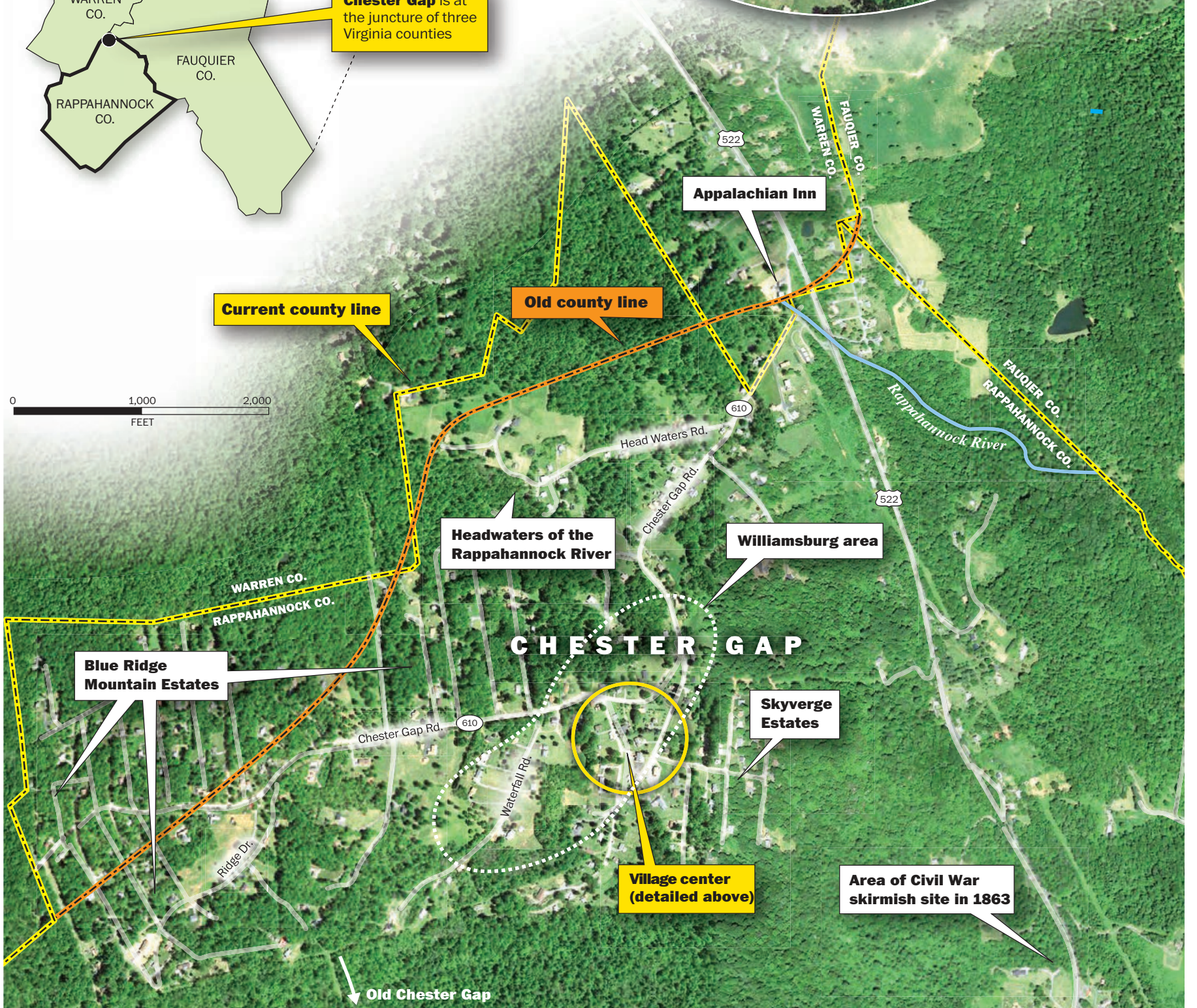
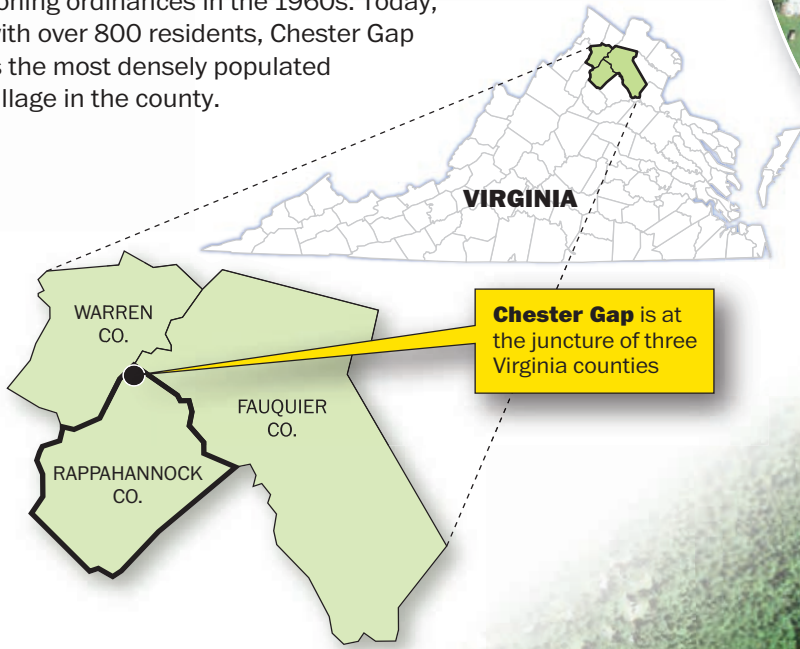
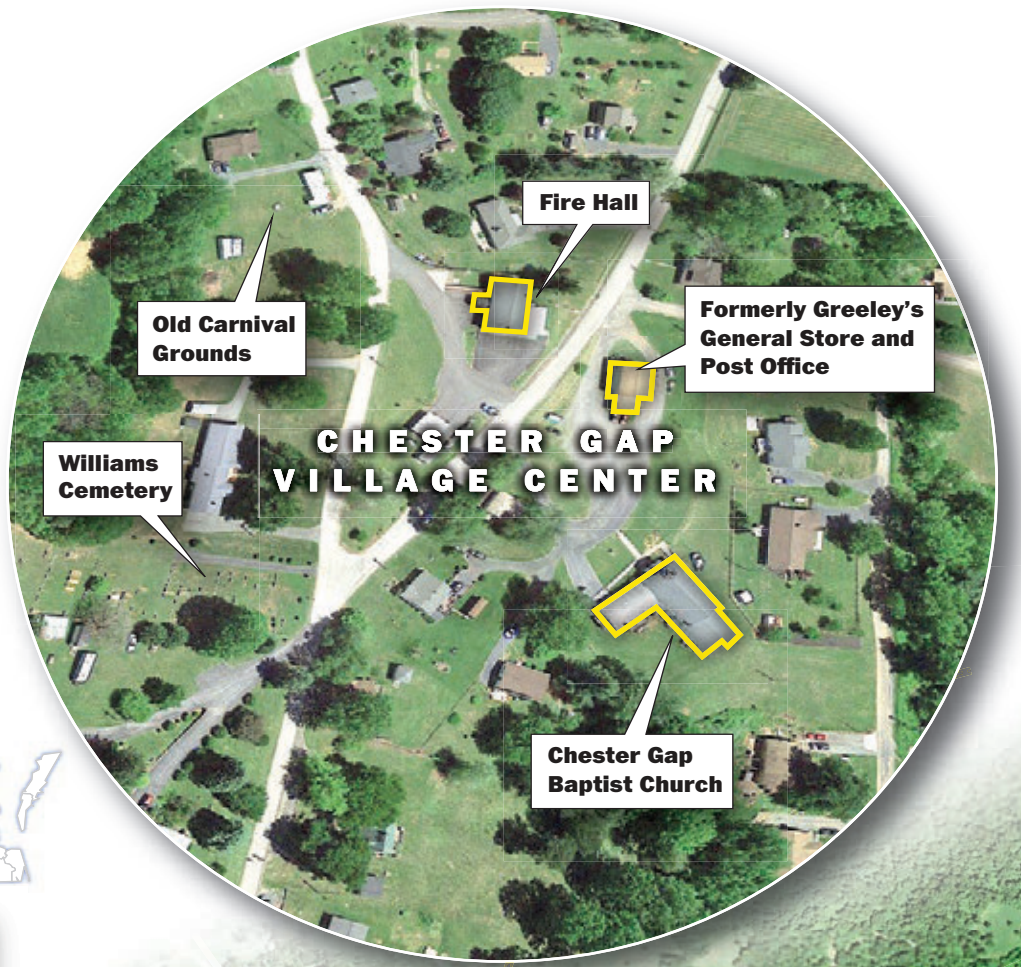


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# Chester Gap: A history of thriving in Rappahannock

Settled in the early 1700's, Chester Gap, is located at the northern end of Rappahannock County. Farming and logging, and, later, apple orchards provided work. A section of the community was known as Williamsburg, named after members of the Williams family who arrived in the 1850's.

A strategic pass into the Shenandoah Valley during the Civil War, it was traversed by both Union and Confederate troops. By the mid 20th century, the village grew to include a well-supplied general store, post office, fire department and Baptist church. Development of the Skyverge and Blue Ridge Mountain Estates subdivisions was the impetus for Rappahannock County's first zoning ordinances in the 1960s. Today, with over 800 residents, Chester Gap is the most densely populated village in the county.



Satellite images by Google Earth

By Robert Hurley and Laura Stanton - For Foothills Forum

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general store; got our first post office in 1954; helped form our first citizens' association; organize the volunteer fire department in 1960; and donated land for both the fire department and the Chester Gap Baptist Church."

When the post office was established, it was agreed to officially name the area Chester Gap. Greeley served as the first postmaster and operated the post office out of his general store, where he kept a small room with a bed.

"In those days postmasters were required to live in the towns where they served," recalled Morris. "But I'm not sure he stayed there very often. He'd let us kids sit in that little room and watch a small black-and-white TV he kept there. It was the first TV I ever saw."

Greeley also owned an apple orchard near his general store. In the mid-1950s he converted it into the village's first residential subdivision, Skyverge Estates, which comprised about 70 lots.

As other open spaces were subdivided in the 1950s and 1960s, the village began its slow transformation into more of a residential neighborhood.

A few years after the Skyverge subdivision, the Blue Ridge Mountains Estates, with about 400 lots at the top of the mountain, were carved from old orchards and woods bordering SNP. But these were little lots, some just 60 feet by 60 feet, and were marketed primarily to urban dwellers as campsites. Because they were so small, people seeking to build permanent homes needed to buy adjacent lots to have room for wells and septic fields.

"Growth kept coming," said Hubie Gilkey who represented Chester Gap on the county Board of Supervisors (BOS) from 1980 to 1998. "First there were a few small seasonal places, then folks started building permanent homes. All those lots were going to suck water out of the ground and then put sewage back in," he said.

"All this potential growth was a cause for concern since there was no subdivision or zoning ordinance in the county at the time. What was going on in Chester Gap was a big driver for the adoption of Rappahannock's first zoning ordinance in 1966."

## A plane crash and a boundary change

Before 2002, the boundaries of Rappahannock, Warren, and Fauquier counties cut through Chester Gap, splitting parcels and creating confusion among residents.

In 2001, the three counties filed a petition in Rappahannock Circuit Court, stating that the uncertainty "resulted in real and personal property being taxed by a County other than the County where the property is located, in children attending school in a County other than the County in which they reside, and in confusion as to jurisdiction in the investigation and prosecution of criminal matters, the

application of zoning and subdivision laws, and the proper place for the recordation of deeds."

According to Peter Luke, Rappahannock County's attorney at the time, government officials didn't know for sure which property belonged in what county and which was the proper taxing authority. "The county revenue commissioners from the three counties would get together and decide who was going to tax what property," he said. "It worked, but in my view, wasn't the best process."

Luke, who had to continually resolve questions over voting locations, law enforcement jurisdiction, zoning, and other local government issues, was the driver behind drawing a new boundary. "Although dealing with those issues

Supervisors adopted the changes in November 1999, and the new boundary line eventually was approved by the circuit court in 2002.

## 'You don't get connected now the way we used to'

For decades community life in Chester Gap centered around the fire hall, the general stores, the post office, and the Baptist church.

"We started the fire department in 1960," said Maybelle Gilkey, who served as the department's treasurer for twenty years. "Back then, there weren't any federal grants, so we had to do a lot of fundraising to keep the



**SISTERS MATTIE FRAZIER AND JESSE WINES**

Mattie was crowned the fireman's carnival's first queen 1962, and she still has her crown.



PHOTOS BY LUKE CHRISTOPHER FOR FOOTHILLS FORUM

was time consuming, the tipping point for me was a tragic plane crash that killed a whole family in Shenandoah National Park.

"No one knew for sure in which county the crash occurred and who had jurisdiction over it," Luke said. "I figured it was high time we got the boundaries straightened out for once and for all."

The boundary adjustment process began in 1997 and ended with a proposal that virtually all of the Chester Gap village area be located in Rappahannock County. The Board of

operation running. That was a main focus of the community. The post office, the general store, and the Baptist church, of course, also provided lots of ways for folks to stay in touch."

One of the big fundraising events was the annual fireman's carnival. Jesse Wines, whose family lived in Chester Gap for generations, recalled: "Every summer, we'd have a carnival with rides, games, and good things to eat. It was a highlight of the summer. People came from all around." Jesse's sister, Mattie Frazier, was crowned the carnival's first queen – and to ➔

## The Voices of Chester Gap

▶ **RONNIE MORRIS**, retired, multi-generation Chester Gap resident: "Back in the day people who knew we were from Chester Gap asked us, 'What are you, a Williams or Wines?' Not so much anymore, though. There are so many names here now. I can sit on my back porch in the morning and nine out of ten cars going by, I don't know who's in them."

Morris recalled a favorite activity at the end of Waterfall Rd. "We'd roll an old tire down the steep waterfalls of Foot of the Mountain stream and see how far it would go. Then we'd drag it all the way back to the top and do it again. It was a ten-second trip down and a ten-minute climb back up."

▶ **JESSE WINES**, retired, multi-generation Chester Gap resident: "Once school got out for the summer we couldn't wait to go barefoot. We'd play in the mountains, swing on the vines, go to the waterfall. We'd stay out until dusk until we heard my mother call us home."

▶ **MATTIE FRAZIER**, retired, multi-generation Chester Gap resident: "Growing up, there would be lawn parties on the open lot by the side of the church. Everybody would bring a dish and they would just sit and talk. Sit and talk for hours."

▶ **KEVIN WILLIAMS**, multi-generation Chester Gap resident, firefighter and former county Emergency Management and Services coordinator: "As kids growing up, there wasn't a whole lot to do, but we'd make our fun. We'd hang out at the fire department or walk up to the old Chester Gap Store. On the way we'd stop at the houses of people we knew and they'd invite us in and give us snacks. You might only see one or two cars on the road."

▶ **JIM VITTITOW**, builder: "We moved here in 1998 and were warmly welcomed. People up here are 'salt of the earth'. They don't put on pretenses, are very accepting, look out for each other, and take a live-and-let-live attitude."

"To raise money during the winter months, the fire department would have shooting matches on Saturday nights. Winners would take home a quarter of beef, half a hog, turkeys, or bacon, all that good stuff."

▶ **JIMMY WILLIAMS**, retired, owner of apartments in the former Greeley general store, multi-generational Chester Gap resident: "It has changed a lot since I was a kid. The older members of the community are passing away."



► **TIFFANY MATTHEWS**, *academic advisor, Laurel Ridge Community College, moved to Chester Gap in 2017*: “Since there isn’t a general gathering place in Chester Gap, it would be nice to have a small park or playground where people could bring their kids and hang out. I think it would help people feel a little more connected.”

► **HELEN ORDILE**, *manager, Piedmont Nursery, lives in Skyverge Estates*: “I grew up on a farm in Amisville and the closest house was my grandparents a mile up the road. Here families are closer, houses are closer. It makes for strong community bonds. My husband grew up here and his best friend lived just down the road. They still hang out together.”

► **PASTOR PAUL STRASSNER, JR.**, *Chester Gap Baptist Church*: “Covid has taken a toll on attendance at a lot of churches. We hope to bring our membership back to 60, maybe 70 people. Our youth program is building, and there is a big desire to bring back adult Bible studies on Sunday mornings. We are here to build the Kingdom, and as we do, God will build the church.”

► **DALE WELCH**, *owner of the Appalachian Inn, lives in Flint Hill*: “It is a very interesting community. Growing up as a child in the 1960s, I remember if the older families liked you, they would do anything in the world for you. But if they didn’t, you’d better not go up there. It’s a much more diverse community today.”

► **SCOTT SCHOSSLER**, *teacher at Rappahannock County High School lives in Fox Pine subdivision across Route 522*: “When we moved here in 1994, we weren’t sure if our home was in Fauquier County or Rappahannock County. We knew our water well was in Warren County. I was teaching at the high school and wanted to live in Rappahannock, so we were able to get the property lines adjusted.”

— Bob Hurley for Foothills Forum

**WHAT IS FOOTHILLS FORUM?**



Foothills Forum is an independent, community-supported nonprofit tackling

the need for in-depth research and reporting on Rappahannock County issues. The group has an agreement with Rappahannock Media, owner of the Rappahannock News, to present this and other reporting projects.

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➔ this day she keeps her crown as a memento of the occasion.

Todd Brown, today’s fire chief, agrees the carnival was a big deal; he met his wife Sandra at the event in 1984. “Everybody in the community would help out baking pies, working in the kitchen, keeping the area clean,” he said. “It was a very community-oriented gathering.”

The fire department closed the carnival in 1995, around the time the county fire tax was levied. “Because of operating costs, insurance, and the fact that a lot of the older volunteers had passed on, it was becoming more and more difficult to run each year,” said Brown. “I would have preferred that we kept it running for a few more years. A lot of folks were upset they lost the carnival and, in its place, had to pay a new tax.”

More change came in the 1990s. The post office closed in 1996 and cluster mailboxes were erected around the village. Greely’s general store changed hands, finally closed in 1964, and later was converted into apartments. Other community stores opened and eventually closed – the last of them, Chester Gap Store, in 2014. New homes were constructed in the existing subdivisions, adding to the influx of new residents.

Residential growth has paused somewhat in the last two years. Of the 73 new construction permits issued in the county since the beginning of 2021, only four were for Chester Gap. Still, as new homes go up, others are sold by old timers to new residents, and the village continues to see change.

“There are so many homes now you don’t know who lives here. Folks wave or whatever, but you don’t get connected now the way we used to,” said Jesse Wines.

Maybelle Gilkey observed the lack of a central meeting place for village residents. “People aren’t able to gather around potbellied stoves or on the porches at community stores,” she said. “You can’t meet at a post office, and the community room at the fire hall was closed a while back to accommodate full time EMT staff. We have the Baptist church and youth activities, but our membership has declined from an average of about 130 people to around 50.”

*‘A forgotten part of the county’*

Today, the village has become something of a bedroom community with its relatively dense population and homes clustered on a close-knit patchwork of roads and lanes.

“A lot of folks who live on the mountain sort of consider it a world unto itself,” said Ubben. “Because of

its location, sometimes residents feel they are a forgotten part of the county.

“We are not landed gentry. Folks up here work hard to pay the bills and keep to themselves. Although some of the old families are still a little clannish, there is an acceptance between the newer residents and those whose family history go back generations. As long as people are decent, there is no reason to differentiate between the been-heres and the come-heres,” he said.

“It is by far the most densely populated area of Rappahannock County,” said Brown, the fire chief. “This area up here on the mountain, which is a little over a square mile, has half the population of the Wakefield district, and we provide a huge tax base for the county. We’ve had our own

didn’t have any bylaw requirements to pay maintenance fees, so it was toothless. If you lived on the road and didn’t want to pay your dues, you didn’t have to.”

Gilkey was on the Board of Supervisors when an arrangement was reached with the Virginia Department of Transportation to begin paving the roads. “VDOT started to take them over, maybe did one or two roads, and then the funding played out so the project just stopped,” he said.

Today, the situation leaves homeowners to fend for themselves, with some going door-to-door, asking neighbors to chip in for road repairs.

“We have had conversations with our neighbors, but it is really difficult to get folks organized to take charge of road repairs, especially if they are



**MAYBELLE GILKEY**

still lives across from where she grew up and was the fire department’s treasurer.

Working at the fireman’s carnival in July 1965 were Garfield Williams, Haywood Williams, John Williams, Albert Williams, Sherman Williams, Joe Williams, Ermand Morris and Hubie Gilkey.

voting precinct for close to 50 years.”

Brown, like many village residents, worries about the condition of the roads in the subdivisions where lot owners are responsible for maintenance.

“Some of these roads are just horrible,” said Brown. “They are rutted, have deep ditches, and are a real hazard. Try taking one of these fire trucks down one of these roads. It is a real challenge,” he said.

A homeowner’s association for Blue Ridge Mountain Estates, long disbanded, was established in the 1960s to collect fees for road upkeep. But as Hubie Gilkey explained: “It

absentee landlords or just own vacant lots,” said Sheila Lamb, who lives in Blue Ridge Mountain Estates. “On our road, two or three families pay thousands of dollars for maintenance but we aren’t the only ones who use it. We are subsidizing others,” she said.

Lamb has reached out to the county for guidance on how to address the problem but with little success.

Wakefield Supervisor and Chair Debbie Donehey, who represents the village, has been trying to find a way to help. “It’s been extremely frustrating,” she said. “VDOT came up with me in



*Continued on next page*



**'THE GAP' TODAY**  
The fire station and old country store and post office.

PHOTOS BY LUKE CHRISTOPHER FOR Foothills Forum

## The Appalachian Inn: *'If you were looking for trouble, you'd find it there'*

The Appalachian Inn sat on the loop of Chester Gap Road, just off of U.S. Route 522. During the 1950s and 60s, it was a favorite haunt for drinking, dancing, and the occasional brawl.

"It was a pretty rough place," said Jimmy Williams, who lives near the now shuttered building. "If you were looking for trouble, you'd find it there."

Local lore has it that the old county boundary line ran right through the inn. Back in the day, you could drink beer in Warren County on Sunday's but not in Rappahannock. On Sundays, patrons would sit on the Warren County side of the inn to enjoy their brew. Others say the inn was just inside Rappahannock County, but to serve customers on Sundays, a concrete block building was constructed a few feet away in Warren County. The block structure is still there, but unfinished.

Whether the stories are true or not, the place had quite a reputation. The inn was mostly patronized by family members living in the village. Dale Welch, who lives in Flint Hill and now owns the property, remembers a story his father told him. "It was the territory of the local folks. If someone from Flint Hill wanted to visit, before they could enter, they had to throw a hat through the door," he said. "If the hat came back out it was a signal they had to move down to Front Royal to do their drinking. If the hat didn't come out, they could go on in and have a good time."

Maybelle Gilkey remembers going there after school. "There was a little store in there and we'd get permission from our parents to stop by and get a Coke or snack after school," she said. "But we'd never be allowed to go near the place at night."

Asked if she had ever gone into the inn, Mattie Frazier laughed and said, "What! And die!"

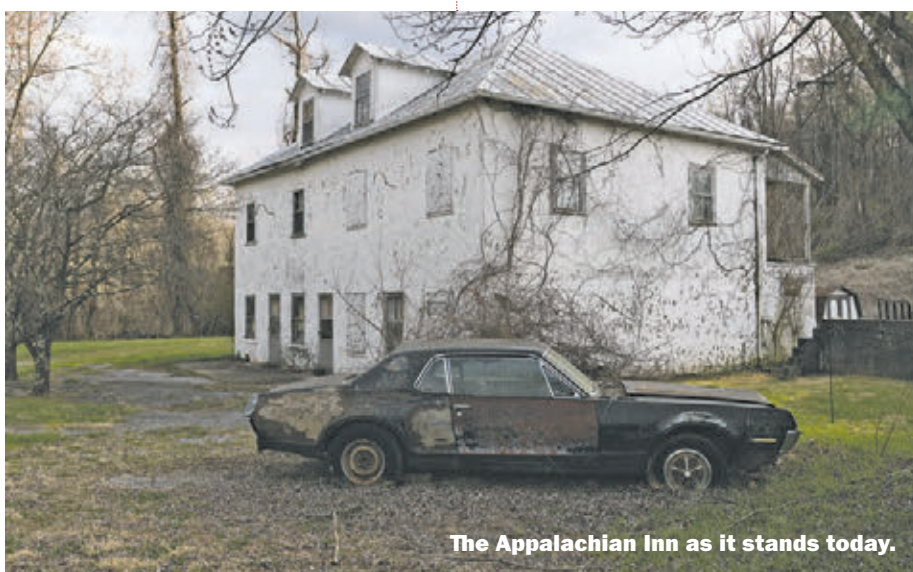
Ronnie Morris recalls peeking

through the windows. "Coming home from getting groceries on summer nights we'd hear the music and see couples dancing," said Morris. "One time my daddy had to go inside and took me and my brother. I was seven years old and had never seen a woman drink beer before. We were shocked to see that. My mama scolded Daddy for taking us in."

Mac McGrail, who lives in Huntly, said Warren County sheriff's deputies often were staked out near the inn. "It was too far away for Rappahannock deputies to cover, but Warren County often had a patrol car close by," he said. "Other than Route 522, there wasn't an easy way for the Front Royal patrons to get back to town. So, the Warren County deputies had a fine time stopping people coming out. I'm sure they had a lot of court cases."

The building still stands but needs repairs. Welch said he didn't have any immediate plans for its future.

— Bob Hurley for Foothills Forum



The Appalachian Inn as it stands today.



*Continued from previous page*

2021 to take a look at some of the roads and give a ballpark cost for repairs and maintenance. I was shocked when they said it would cost over \$600,000 to just bring one short road in Skyverge Estates into conformance with VDOT standards.

"It's not for a lack of trying, but even if we got grant money and shared the costs with VDOT, upgrading the roads would still be a huge cost for our county," she said.

"I know folks up on the mountain don't always feel they have easy access to county services. That is particularly true about having to drive all the way to Flatwood or Amissville to dump their trash. I'm exploring ways to see if it might be possible for Chester Gap residents to take their trash to closer facilities in Warren County."

### Snow days

To many residents, the harsh weather of Chester Gap relative to elsewhere in the county helps to define the village's identity.

"We have the worst, and most diverse weather in the county," said Brown. "Ice storms, heavy snow, fog

that sticks around for days, you name it. It could be snowing up here and sunny in Flint Hill."

Conditions in Chester Gap often were the determining factor as to whether Rappahannock County schools would close in bad weather.

"It would be rainy or a wet snow down below, but up here it was heavy snow or ice, and they would close schools because of the weather in Chester Gap," said Ubben, the deputy sheriff and member of the School Board. "Some parents in other parts of the county would complain about having their kids stay home because students who lived on the mountain couldn't make it in."

That changed last year when the school administration adopted a policy which now allows Chester Gap students excused absences if weather conditions on the mountain warrant. "It is kind of the compromise that keeps the schools open, while making sure our kids stayed safe. Now we can have our kids, or some of our kids, excused while everybody else is still going to class," said Ubben.

### Peace and quiet

Despite so much change, Mattie Frazier said parts of the community have retained the atmosphere of past decades. "Life in the old core part of the village around the Williamsburg area is pretty much the same. It hasn't changed that much."

Born and raised in Chester Gap, Jimmy Williams, 77, loves the peace and quiet. "Even though you don't know people like you used to know them, it's a good community to live in."

Maybelle Gilkey, the former fire department treasurer, still lives across the street from her childhood home. She summed up her feelings about the village. "My kids always said they were glad they grew up in Chester Gap. You had memories, you had family, and you were a community. Everybody knew everybody, and it was a fun place. I hope we can continue to have that kind of community into the future."



RAPPAHANNOCK PLACES

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BY LUKE CHRISTOPHER FOR FOOTHILLS FORUM

# WOODVILLE

*Rapp's peaceful hamlet: rich history, evolving future*

**BY BOB HURLEY** | *For Foothills Forum*

**W**oodville, a blink of a hamlet that's a 60-second drive-through between Sperryville and Culpeper on U.S. Route 522, may be the smallest village in Rappahannock County, but it has a rich, colorful history and now, evolving possibilities for its future.

Woodville's story is replicated in small

towns across the Virginia Piedmont — prosperous growth in the 19th century followed by decades of decline in commerce and population. And now, the beginnings of a new chapter for Woodville are tied to the slowly emerging fate of the sprawling Eldon Farms.

See **WOODVILLE**, Page 12



**THE VIEW FROM RED OAK**

**Shiloh Baptist Church** seen from about one quarter up Red Oak Mountain. It was the only church not severely damaged by the 1929 tornado.

**WOODVILLE**

*From Page 1*

At 7100 acres, the property is one of the East Coast’s biggest, undivided landholdings. Making up about half of Woodville’s 22749 zip code, it stretches along the southwest side of Woodville, south toward Slate Mills and west to Sperryville.

“We recognize Eldon has an important influence on Woodville,” said Chuck Akre, who purchased the farm in 2021 and also is developing the first mixed-use development in Little Washington where he lives. “We don’t have anything planned for the property, and should its use ever change to something other than cattle pasture, it would have to be completely compatible with the community.”

Akre has engaged a landscape architecture firm, Nelson Byrd Woltz, in Charlottesville, to develop a “massive” long range plan for the property. Addressing conservation, community accessibility, nature trails, agriculture and a viable cattle operation, it is expected to be completed next year.

*Woodville’s past*

The origins of Woodville date to land grants issued by Lord Fairfax in the mid-1700s. In 1833, it was in

the running for Rappahannock’s county seat. During the Civil War, thousands of Confederate and Union troops regularly occupied its fields and homes. In 1929 it was nearly destroyed by a powerful tornado. On nearby Red Oak Mountain, orchards produced some of the finest apples in the county. Today, Woodville is one of six villages identified in the county’s Comprehensive Plan.

Local historian Misty Hitt Wright, whose family ties to the village date back to the 1840s, said: “Key events like the Civil War, population shifts to the cities in the early 1900s, the tornado in 1929, the decline of farming, and the creation of Eldon Farms in the 1960s all brought changes to the village.”

Once a bustling community of shops, tradesmen, taverns, doctors, four churches and even a hotel,

Woodville today is a quiet village. Residents, many whose families have lived there for generations, treasure its history and sense of community.

A small cluster of homes and just three lots zoned for commercial activity are the “core” of the village. Other than Burke’s Antiques and Consignments, formerly Burke’s Store, there are no retail businesses. The village’s last outlet, Mary’s Little Shop, closed in 2010.

After 195 years, the village post office closed in 1998. But its sprawling zip code remains, stretching from Scrabble to Sperryville and from Rock Mills to F. T. Valley Road.

*It could have been the county seat*

Following a local petition, Woodville was established in 1798 by an act of the Virginia General Assembly, two years after “Little” Washington. The town was laid off on half-acre lots, with streets named for trees like Poplar, Walnut and Maple. Although most have since disappeared, Cherry Street, once the town’s main street, now is part of U.S. Route 522.

There is some debate over how Woodville got its name. Some say it was for the surrounding forests.



**Eldon Farms’ owner Chuck Akre** shakes hands during last year’s John Jackson Piedmont Blues Festival, held on the sprawling property.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **LUKE CHRISTOPHER** FOR FOOTHILLS FORUM

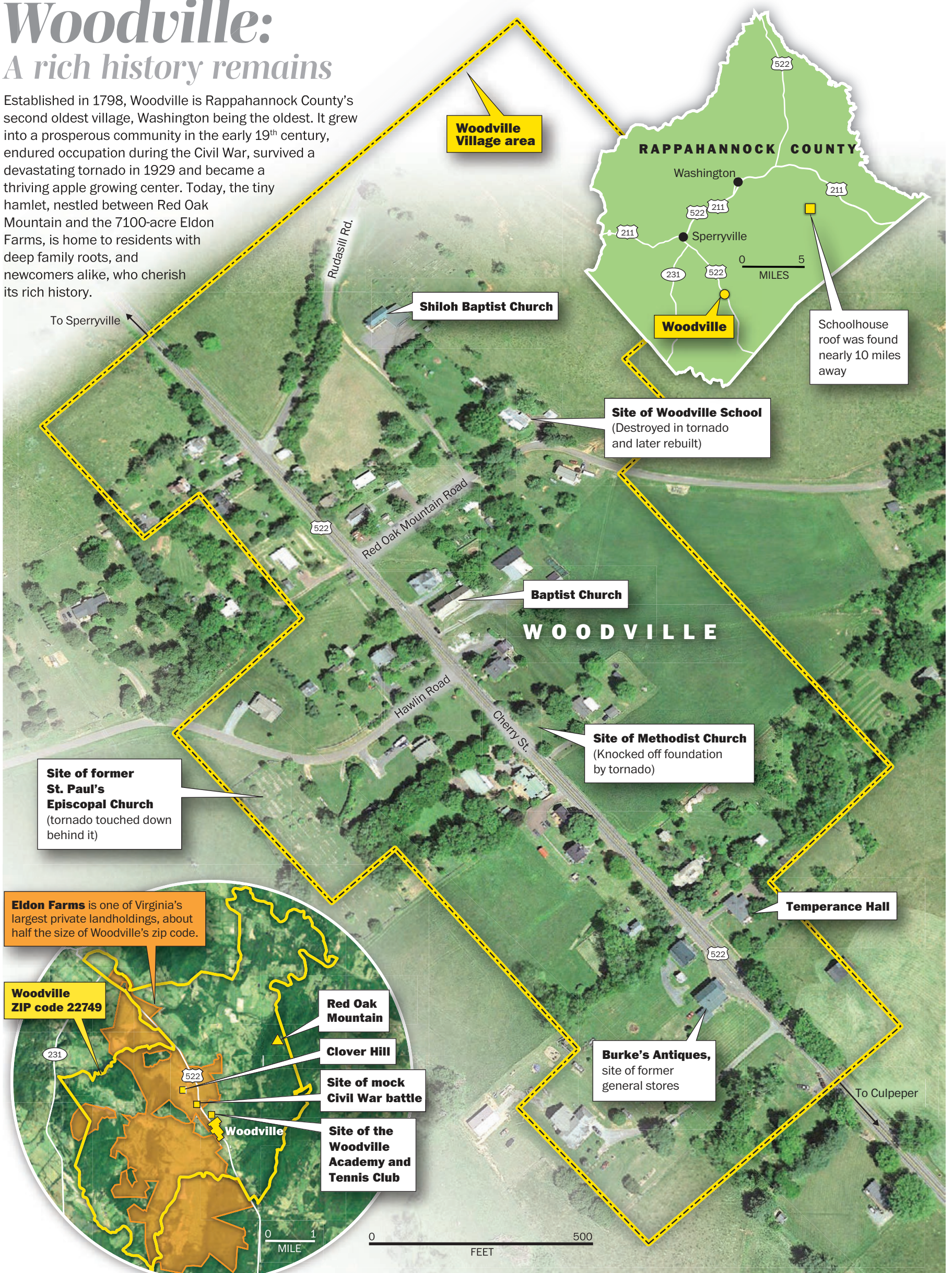
*Continued on Page 14* ➔



# Woodville:

## A rich history remains

Established in 1798, Woodville is Rappahannock County's second oldest village, Washington being the oldest. It grew into a prosperous community in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, endured occupation during the Civil War, survived a devastating tornado in 1929 and became a thriving apple growing center. Today, the tiny hamlet, nestled between Red Oak Mountain and the 7100-acre Eldon Farms, is home to residents with deep family roots, and newcomers alike, who cherish its rich history.



Satellite images by Google Earth

By Robert Hurley and Laura Stanton for Foothills Forum

➔ *Continued from Page 12*

Others believe it was named for Rev. John Woodville, the rector of St. Mark's parish in Culpeper, who often visited the village.

When Rappahannock County split from Culpeper County in 1833, county leaders had to decide where to locate the county courthouse. By then, both Woodville and Washington were thriving communities and each vied to be the county seat. Some in Woodville opposed the move, including Captain William Walden, an influential landowner. He and others were said to worry that drunken and rowdy behavior on court days would corrupt the town.

In the end, Washington was chosen, likely because it was more centrally located.

## A Civil War thoroughfare

*"I am now camped in a beautiful rolling, hilly mountainous country. Large farms, mostly of clover and timothy, cattle being the chief business... All the [white] people are hot secessionists. ... All the young men are in the rebel army..."*

— Gen. Robert H. Milroy to Mary Milroy, July 14, 1862

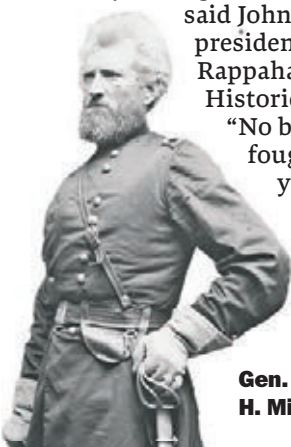
Woodville expanded as an economic center with the approval, in 1848, of the New Market to Sperryville turnpike, connecting the village to Culpeper to make it an important thoroughfare in the coming Civil War.

Its hard surface was perfect for moving both Confederate and Union troops and artillery to battles in the Shenandoah Valley and north, to places like Antietam and Gettysburg.

"Woodville was the site of a lot of activity during the Civil War,"

said John Tole, president of the Rappahannock Historical Society.

"No battles were fought, but you had thousands of soldiers on both sides



**Gen. Robert H. Milroy**

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PHOTOS BY LUKE CHRISTOPHER FOR FOOTHILLS FORUM

### FAMILY ON THE MOUNTAIN

**Cousins Kathy Grove, right, and Tom Johnson, above** on the site of William Johnson's original home about halfway up Red Oak. "The Red Oak really reminds me of that 1970s TV show, 'The Waltons.'"

Back in the old days, it was mostly all Johnsons who lived on the mountain," Johnson said.

marching through or camping there, using the same sites multiple times throughout the war."

A Union brigade of 5,000 men commanded by Gen. Robert H. Milroy camped around Woodville in the summer of 1862. Milroy, a fervent Unionist who made his headquarters at the Clover Hill estate, now part of Eldon Farms, rounded up over 100 locals and forced them to pledge allegiance to the United States.

Milroy and fellow Union General Franz Sigel, who commanded 8,000 troops camped at Sperryville, trained in a mock battle in July 1862 near the intersection of U.S. Route 522 and Yancy Road. According to Tole, it was the largest military action in the county during the Civil War.

A year later, at the Second Battle of Winchester, Milroy was defeated by Confederate General Richard Ewell. Ironically, Ewell marched through Woodville on his way to the battle.

### Generations on Red Oak

Known for its spectacular views, fertile fields, and once abundant apple orchards, Red Oak Mountain always has been considered integral to Woodville — and a draw for the rest of the county.

The Johnson family reportedly was first to settle "the Red Oak," in the mid-1700s. The original cabin still stands and is owned by the family of Henry B. Wood III, a direct descendant of William Johnson who



had purchased most of the mountain in 1764.

"I go back probably nine or 10 generations in the Johnson family line," said Wood. "A lot of the old families around here have a genealogical connection to that family."

Two of those connections, Kathy Grove and Tom Johnson had deep family ties in the area, but grew up away from Woodville — Kathy in Arlington, Va., and Tom in Lakeland,

Fla. As youngsters, both made family visits during the summer.

"Woodville was my summer camp," said Grove. "As a little girl I loved spending time up on the Red Oak, visiting my great uncle Raymond Johnson, great aunt Juliette and great-grandmother, Florence Johnson. When I was older, I'd drive out for the day with friends to show them around the mountain with its fabulous views and visit the old family cemetery up there where many of my relatives are buried."

Over the years, Grove maintained her strong connection to the community and in 2004 permanently moved near the village, into a 1750s farmhouse, which she and her husband, Larry, renovated.

Tom Johnson now lives in his grandparents' home, where he too spent summers in his youth. "I liked the country life," he said. "I'd help around the house, feed the chickens and cows, weed the vegetable garden and go for long walks

**"Over time you fall in love with the mountains and country living and form roots and attachments to the place so that you can't shake it. That is why we came back."**

— William Jones Jr.



## Who's Who of Woodville

"For such a small village, Woodville was a pretty diverse community," said Henry B. Wood III, a Woodville native and 10th generation descendant of the Wood and Johnson families. "Over the years, the area had its share of famous and not so famous people."

**Dr. James Gideon Brown** – Woodville physician, Dr. James Gideon Brown, graduated second in the class of 1889 at the University of Pennsylvania medical school. He served the village population for decades. "As a diagnostician, his opinions are sought and accepted by the profession, for in this he is a genius," Mary Elizabeth Hite wrote in "My Rappahannock Story Book." Dr. Brown passed away in 1950. He is buried with his wife at St. Paul's Episcopal Cemetery.

**Gerald Stanley Hawkins** – British born American astronomer, Gerald Hawkins, worked in the field of archaeoastronomy, a discipline focused on the practices of ancient cultures as they related to celestial objects or phenomena. He served as professor and chair of the astronomy department at Boston University in 1957, and from 1969-71 as a dean at Dickinson College, in Carlisle, Pa. Hawkins is best known for his 1965 book Stonehenge Decoded. He believed the ancient monument, located in England, was arranged in a way to predict astronomical events. Although some experts were skeptical of his analysis, others have built upon his work. After working academia, Hawkins finished his career as a science advisor at the U.S. Information Agency, retiring in 1989. He died in 2003 and is buried at St. Paul's Episcopal Cemetery.

**Emily Jane Hilscher** – Woodville resident and 2006 Rappahannock High School graduate, Emily Hilscher tragically died at the hands of a gunman during the Virginia Tech shootings in April 2007. Not only the county, but the nation mourned. She was the first of 32 victims who lost their lives that day. A freshman, Emily was majoring in animal and poultry sciences and had her sights



set on becoming a veterinarian. Her obituary reads: "She was an animal lover, skilled horsewoman, and an enthusiastic cook. Her free and imaginative spirit and innate talents led to the creation of a variety of artistic treasures that she shared with those whom she loved."



**John Jackson** – Famous "Piedmont blues" singer and guitarist, John Jackson, a Woodville native, grew up in the 1920s in a musical family with

13 siblings. His first songs were recorded in the early 1960s. Over the years he recorded 10 albums; toured the world, playing at concerts and festivals; and performed at the White House during President Jimmy Carter's administration. In 1986, Jackson received the prestigious National Heritage Fellowship Award from the National Endowment for the Arts. He passed away in 2002.

**James "Jack" Kilpatrick** – Syndicated columnist and television commentator, "Jack" Kilpatrick moved to Woodville in the late 1960s yet he used the dateline "Scrabble" in his newspaper columns as he thought it would be more fetching. During the 1950s and early 1960s he was editor of the Richmond News Leader in Richmond, Va. Known for his conservative political views he appeared in the 1970s on the television news program, 60 Minutes, opposite liberal commentators. An early booster of The Inn at Little Washington, Kilpatrick appeared in a photo on the cover of the 1987 Rappahannock County calendar along with Patrick O'Connell and the inn's staff.



**Sen. Eugene McCarthy** – A Democratic presidential candidate in the 1968 election, Sen. Eugene McCarthy moved to Amissville and then Woodville in 1977 after he retired from politics. "He fully embraced the community and the rural way of life here," said

his daughter, Ellen. McCarthy often asked his Washington, D.C., friends for money so he could buy their postage stamps at Woodville's post office. "He loved that little post office and wanted to do everything he could to keep it open," she said. McCarthy passed away in 2005 and is buried with his sister at St. Paul's Episcopal Cemetery.



**Frank McGee** – NBC News journalist Frank McGee (below right with Gene Shalit and Barbara Walters on the Today Show) covered politics, moderated the second Richard Nixon-John F. Kennedy presidential debate in 1960 and later covered the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963. In the late 1960s, he hosted the "Frank McGee Report," an in-depth news program. He anchored the NBC Nightly News in 1970, after which he co-hosted the Today Show until 1974, the year he died. McGee and his wife are buried at St. Paul's Episcopal Cemetery.



**Dr. Dinwiddie Phillips** – Physician in the Confederate States Navy, Dr. Dinwiddie Phillips served as surgeon on the Confederate ironclad warship the Merrimack. He wrote the first account of the famous naval battle in 1862 between the Merrimack and the Union ironclad warship, the Monitor. Dinwiddie is buried in St. Paul's Episcopal Cemetery.

**Florence "Flossie" Williamson** – Known as the "Herb Lady of Woodville," Florence "Flossie" Williamson inspired Rappahannock's herb business which eventually led to the establishment of Faith Mountain Herbs and Antiques in the mid-1970s, and later Green Comfort School, Abracadabra Massage and Wellness and Wild Roots Apothecary. In the late 1950s Williamson came up with the idea of selling floral art at what would become the annual Trinity Episcopal Church House Tour, the proceeds of which went to local charities.

– Bob Hurley for Foothills Forum

➔ up the Red Oak to visit my uncle Raymond who lived in the house at the top. The Red Oak really reminds me of that 1970s TV show, "The Waltons." Back in the old days, it was mostly all Johnsons who lived on the mountain."

After his uncle passed away, the family house was owned for 50 years by someone outside the county who rarely used it. "I ended up living there as a tenant when I moved here in 1994, and a couple of years ago, I had the opportunity to buy it. It's nice to have the old homestead back in the family," said Johnson.

Not every family who lived on the Red Oak were Johnsons.

William Jones Jr.'s great-great grandfather, James Foley Jones bought a 90-acre farm on the mountain in 1882. Jones Jr., a former automobile industry executive and retired president of a nonprofit organization in Michigan, bought the property from relatives 10 years ago and retired there with his wife in 2021.

Like Kathy Grove and Tom Johnson, Jones did not grow up in Woodville. "My father lived off-and-on in Woodville. The schools were segregated then so he spent time in Culpeper because it was easier for him to attend what was then the Black George Washington Carver School," he said.

Jones' father, William Sr., later married and ended up living in Hampton, Va., and young William, who grew up there, would spend his summers in Woodville, helping his grandparents on the farm.

"Working with livestock, gardening, and helping to maintain the old family place was a far cry from living in the city, but I enjoyed it," said Jones. "In later years, we'd always return for visits and holidays. Over time you fall in love with the mountains and country living and form roots and attachments to the place so that you can't shake it. That is why we came back."

Apples were big business on the Red Oak. "The mountain's altitude

allowed for temperature inversion so in the spring, when the trees were budding and a freeze came in the valley, the warm air would rise and protect the apple crop," said Wood. "During cold spells, folks with orchards on the higher ground often did better than those who had orchards at lower elevations."

"There was big money in apples," recalled James Johnson, Tom's father, a retired gastroenterologist in Lakeland, Fla. "When I was growing up in Woodville back in the 1940s, you could make up to \$10 a day picking apples. That was a lot when compared to making a dollar a day for farm work," he said.

### COMING UP

**Tornado devastates Woodville (below); decades later, hippies call it home. Next week in the Rappahannock News.**





**A HAVEN FOR FREE SPIRITS**  
**Sam Clifton's surprise 40th birthday party** (circa 1994), at a home that dated to the eighteenth century.

The home now has been demolished, but the two chimneys are still standing.  
*Below:* Clifton, with son Smith and wife Kate, at the property this week.

COURTESY PHOTO

# Tornado devastates Woodville . . . Decades later, hippies call it home

BY BOB HURLEY  
 For Foothills Forum

**“W**oodville’s history is a series of layers, and one of those layers was the 1960s and 70s when the hippies came to the community,” said local historian Misty Hitt Wright whose family ties to the village date back to the 1840s.

Beginning in the mid 1960s, William Lane of Chicago began buying up farms and estates in the area, including Little Eldon, Mountain Home and Clover Hill, and combined the properties into what he named Eldon Farms.

“It was a tough time in agriculture and the older generation weren’t farming as much back then,” said Henry B. Wood III, whose family line goes back nine or 10 generations. “They were ready to sell their property, so Mr. Lane was able to purchase thousands of acres of farmland and forest.”

Many of the farms had tenant houses for workers and their families. “When the farms were sold and owners and tenants left, Woodville lost a lot of its population and that affected what businesses were left in the community,” said Wood.

In the ‘back to the land’ movement in the 1960s and 70s, Eldon Farms became a popular destination for young people seeking alternative lifestyles.

“I remember the free-spirited types were scattered in those houses all around Eldon and would come down to our general store to buy groceries and supplies,” said Richie Burke, whose family owned Burke’s Store in

Woodville.

Sam Clifton, a retired builder who lives with his wife, Kate, off Whorton Hollow Road, moved to Woodville in 1973 and leased a large stone house – paying \$125 a month rent, half of what he paid for a tiny apartment in New York. “It was heaven,” he said. “We had hot and cold running water which was a real plus. Most of the old tenant

houses on Eldon where my friends lived didn’t have plumbing.”

On Thursdays, Clifton would invite friends from the Spyder Mountain commune near Sperryville to come down for a hot bath. “Our place was a pretty popular hangout,” he said.

Later, Clifton moved to a house on Red Oak Mountain where he lived for 14 years. “I never met the landlord, who lived in the D.C. area, or paid rent on that house, although we kept it up quite nicely. That’s just the way things were back then,” he said.

“The old-time village folks graciously accepted us newcomers,” said Clifton. When their son, Smith, was born in the house on Red Oak Mountain, Betty Wood, the wife of long-time village resident and county supervisor H.B. Wood, gifted them a blanket she had knitted and a Bible. “She said our son was the first child born on the mountain in 80 years. You can’t beat that for neighborliness.”

Burke, who now is the construction and property manager at Eldon Farms, said about 25 of the tenant houses, some of which fell into disrepair, were torn down or had burned down. “Back around 1980 the Sperryville Fire Department burned a lot of houses for training purposes,” he said.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LUKE CHRISTOPHER FOR FOOTHILLS FORUM



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RAPPAHANNOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## The Tornado / Woodville would never be the same again

**O**n Thursday, May 2, 1929, Woodville changed forever.

There was little warning. A powerful tornado touched down, destroying the school, churches, homes and other buildings. Lives were lost.

The four-room Woodville School was particularly hard hit. According to reports in the Madison Eagle, about 40 students were at the school. As winds began to rock the building, teachers dismissed the students.

Many found refuge in nearby homes. Others weren't as lucky.

As parents began searching for their children, Marshall Hawkins, 14, was found dead near the school, his neck broken by a flying door. Others were blown into nearby fields and sustained life-threatening injuries. Two teachers suffered cuts and bruises.

Had he lived, Marshall Hawkins would have been the uncle of Diane Bruce who lives in Sperryville. "My mother, Marshall's sister, was at the high school in Sperryville when the tornado hit," said Bruce. "They had no idea what happened, but when she returned to Woodville on the school bus, she said she saw destruction everywhere. People were just staggering around with mud all



**St. Paul's Episcopal Church** over them, clothes torn and had looks of bewilderment," she said.

The tornado struck close to St. Paul's Episcopal Church which was destroyed and never rebuilt. The Woodville Baptist Church, which had just been remodeled, also was leveled, but later rebuilt. The Methodist Church was pushed off its foundation and later was torn down in the 1950s.

A number of homes were destroyed. The Botts' house lay in ruins, except for the bedroom where Cora Botts lay in her bed unharmed. According to legend, she was found singing a hymn and covered with sheets of the Virginia Baptist newspaper, The Religious Herald,



**The Woodville School** which she said had protected her.

Part of the school's roof ended up in a field 10 miles away near Ben Venue. The school's piano was lifted over a hill and landed 100 yards away. A student's schoolbook was found in Jefferson County, W.Va., some 50 miles away.

"The destruction here was complete as ever witnessed," reported the Culpeper Star Exponent.

The path of the tornado continued up Red Oak Mountain in a northeasterly direction and into Fauquier County. Before it left Rappahannock, it claimed three more lives – a man near Rock Mills, and a woman and her child near Ben Venue.

A new two-room elementary school was built on the site later that year. Closed in 1954, it now is a private residence.

Woodville was one of many Virginia communities to be struck that day.

Five tornadoes, stretching from Scott County, in southwest Virginia, to Loudon County, in the north, caused widespread devastation, reportedly killing 22 people and injuring dozens more. So deadly was the tornado outbreak, that the weather service in Virginia designates the first week in May as Severe Storm Awareness Week.

– Bob Hurley for Foothills Forum

## Tornado and its aftermath

During the turn of the last century, Woodville's community life revolved around its four churches: St. Paul's Episcopal, Woodville Baptist Church, Shiloh Baptist Church and the Woodville Methodist Church; a Temperance Hall where town meetings, dances and concerts were held; the elementary and high school; and the post office and general stores, where area residents would gather to catch up on the local news. The "Woodville Academy and Tennis Club" also was a popular spot.

When a powerful tornado struck in May of 1929, it flattened the schoolhouse, killing one child and injuring four others. Many homes and other buildings were crushed or damaged. St. Paul's Episcopal Church and the Woodville Baptist Church were completely destroyed. The Baptist church was rebuilt, but all that remains today of St. Paul's is its cemetery. The

The parade had 126 entries - floats, marching groups, live bands, re-enactors and dozens of antique cars. "We even worked with the post office, with thanks to (architect, artist and active community member) Tom Tepper, to have a personalized cancellation stamp to be used at the celebration," said Light.

Before it disbanded around 2000, the WCO was instrumental in reducing the speed limit in the village to 35 mph, constructing the village's boundary signs and expanding the shoulder of U.S. Route 522 through the village for safer pedestrian movement.

## An 'idyllic' place

What Woodville lacks in size and amenities it makes up for in its beauty.

"Our little village is in a valley between two massive open tracts of land, with towering Red Oak Mountain on one side and Eldon Farms, on the other," said Van Carney, Stonewall-Hawthorne district supervisor, who



**"The town never really recovered from that tornado," said John Tole, president of the Rappahannock Historical Society.**

Methodist church was knocked off its foundation and later was torn down. Only Shiloh Baptist Church escaped the storm's fury.

"The town never really recovered from that tornado," said John Tole, president of the Rappahannock Historical Society.

More recent efforts to revitalize the town's community spirit picked-up when the village marked its 200-year anniversary in 1998.

"In 1997, we realized that the village was going to be 200 years old, so some of us came together and started the Woodville Community Organization (WCO) to plan for a bicentennial celebration," said Jeff Light, a local resident and pastor of NOVUM Baptist Church in Reva, Va.

"We wanted to celebrate not just Woodville, but the entire county through a history parade and festival that showcased significant events in Rappahannock's history. Our aim was to involve as many diverse groups as possible and revitalize our community along with neighboring villages and hamlets," he said.

lives in the village with his wife, Julia, and their three sons. "The topology and natural resources around us provide an ecological oasis full of wildlife, night skies and peaceful solitude. It is a wonderful place to raise a family."

Lynnie and John Genho agree. Both were in their mid-20s when they moved to Woodville from upstate New York in 2005. "We couldn't believe our eyes when we arrived here," said Lynnie. "It was so beautiful, it was like a place where you'd want to retire," she said. John, who was hired as farm manager at Eldon Farms, remembers asking, "This place is idyllic, where do we go from here?"

"The village doesn't have a fire department, post office, or stores where residents can congregate, but it's the little things we do to keep the community spirit strong," said Lynnie. "Lots of folks go for walks down Hawlin Road or up the Red Oak Mountain Road, so you are always meeting your neighbors and catching up on things."

Continued on Page 14 →

➔ *Continued from Page 13*

“During the Covid years, when there was no Christmas parade in Little Washington, a group of neighbors got together and decorated the old store at Rudasill Mill Road and U.S. 522 with lights and ornaments. It was a wonderful community activity,” she said.

Lynnie hopes someday one or two acres of land along Hawlin Road could be set aside as a playground and gathering place for local kids and families. “You’d be surprised at the number of children that live in or near Woodville,” she said. “Having a place where they could congregate would be great for the community.”

A continuing concern for residents is motorists speeding through the village. The sheriff’s deputies regularly stakeout the village stretch of U.S. Route 522 for speeders, but problems persist.

“Some years back residents were able to get the speed limit through the village reduced from 55 mph to 35 mph,” said Carney. “But despite the lower speed limit, people still cruise through the village at high speeds. It is quite dangerous given how close many homes are to the road.”

In an effort to slow traffic, Carney is working to get solar-powered speed sensors placed at each end of the village to warn drivers they are speeding. “I’m very sensitive to this and will continue to do whatever we can with VDOT to slow traffic down,” he said.

## Woodville’s future

As for the future, most people interviewed for this article expect things will stay just as they are in Woodville. Although they mentioned one caveat – the future use of Eldon Farms.

The property primarily is a cattle operation, although several rental homes are scattered around the estate. Clover Hill, one of the oldest homes on the property dating back to 1750, serves as a venue for functions, including the John Jackson Blues Festival, Headwater’s Harvest Festival and other community activities.

“With Rappahannock County only 70 miles from Washington, D.C., its greatest asset is also its greatest liability, and that is its beautiful open space,” Eldon Farms’ owner



PHOTOS BY LUKE CHRISTOPHER FOR FOOTHILLS FORUM

Chuck Akre said. “Our ultimate goal is to preserve that open space for the county, and its residents.”

Akre expects entertainment and community events will continue at the Clover Hill venue – the John Jackson Piedmont Blues Festival is Sept. 30 and Headwaters Harvest Festival is scheduled for Oct 7. Currently, fees are not collected for these types of events, but that might change.

“Outdoor entertainment events are a way of preserving open space but they do cost money to host,” said Akre. “At some point it would be nice if they would at least pay for

themselves.”

Martha O’Bannon Hitt, who grew up at Clover Hill before it was sold to William Lane, fondly remembers her days on the farm. “We rode horses, helped drive cows, fed the hogs, all the fun things you do on a farm,” she said. “I couldn’t think of a better place to grow up.”

As for the future, Hitt believes change won’t come anytime soon. “I don’t think Woodville is going to change a lot, so long as it doesn’t get developed by the new owner of Eldon Farms, and I don’t think he will anytime soon,” she said.

**Richie Burke, construction and property manager at Eldon Farms, in his family’s antiques store, which he still opens by appointment. For years, it was Woodville’s general store.**



### READ PART 1

**Missed last week’s story?**

Read about Woodville’s beginnings, its role in

the Civil War and the notable people who have called it home at [rappnews.link/woodville](https://www.rappnews.com/link/woodville)



**The Genho family bought the building that once was Mary’s Little Shop, which sits on the corner of 522 and Rudasill Mill Road. “We couldn’t believe our eyes when we arrived here,” said Lynnie, with her husband John and several of her children, Anne, Adele and Elias. “It was so beautiful, it was like a place where you’d want to retire.”**

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