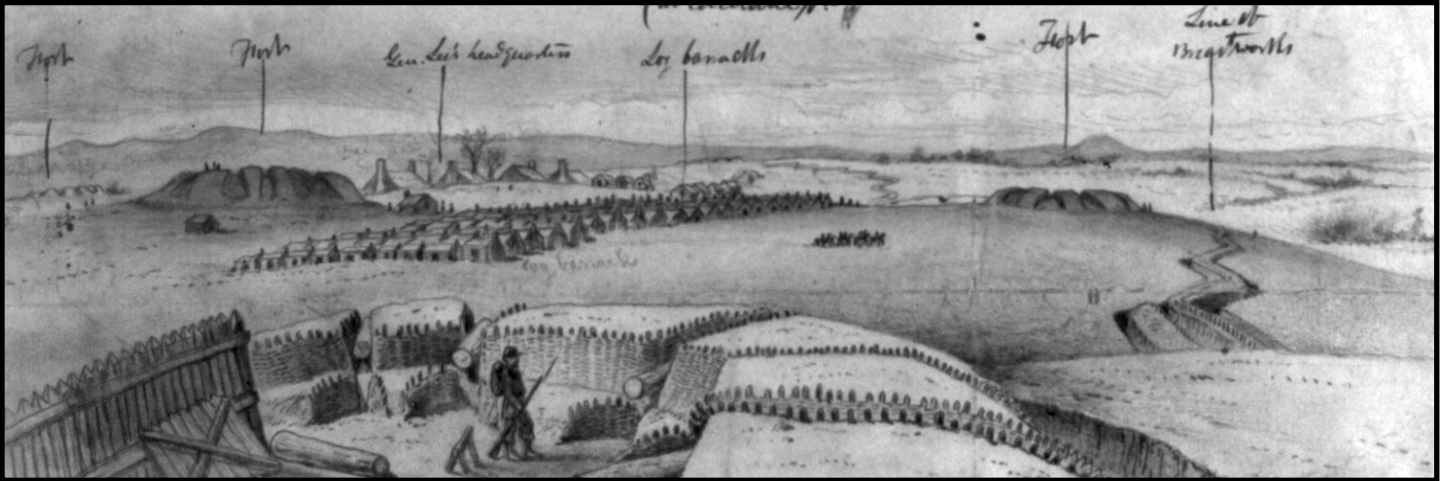




# The Millrace

September 2019



## HISTORIC CENTREVILLE SOCIETY QUARTERLY MEETING

at the Centreville Regional  
Library, Meeting Room #1

SEPTEMBER 16, 7:00 PM

## FORTIFICATIONS AT CENTREVILLE

by John Carter

Mr. Carter will kindly share the results of his extensive research that has revealed new information about the Civil War fortifications that once surrounded Centreville.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

*Paul Hancq reports on our picnic and the Centreville Six Civil War Trails sign dedication. Claudette C. Ward's article traces the relationship between Chris Sperling's talk in March and her own family history. And, since Virginia is commemorating the inclusion of women in the colonization effort of the Virginia Company, we have included an article by Debbie Robison on Fairfax County's place in women's history in Virginia.*

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## Update from the Board

Greetings to all the members of the Historic Centreville Society (HCS)!

Our quarterly event in June was the annual summer picnic at Mount Gilead. For historical content, Cheryl Repetti displayed her exhibits about African-American history in Centreville. While our group of 11 people was enjoying the potluck meal, Cheryl told us about that history, including the tale of how landowner Robert Carter III freed hundreds of his slaves due to his spiritual awakening.

There is not much else to write about in this space at this time. We hope to see you at our September event!

Paul Hancq  
President

## Centreville Connections

By Claudette C. Ward

The program on March 9 in which Chris Sperling told us and showed slides of slave quarters near Centreville was very interesting, and to me very exciting.

I wish Sperling had not been under time constraints. He had no time to speak of a property Chain of Title, of who the people were who had owned the slaves.

The site is on Braddock Road on land now owned by Fairfax County. It appears to be on part of what was Walter Griffin's patent of 409 acres granted in October 1728. Walter Griffin and Benjamin Griffin patented 385 acres in 1719, which were near Ox Road (Rt. 123), the

earliest road into what became the Centreville area. The road was known as "Walter Griffin's Rowling Road." Later it became known as "the Mountain Road," and then, Braddock Road. It is believed an old Indian trail was improved to use as a rolling road. Tobacco was put into a large cask, called a hogshead, and rolled on its side, pulled by horses or oxen down to the port.

Apparently Griffin was raising tobacco on his land, and he must have had slaves. Was the log house on the site a patent house built by Griffin? Is this where he lived and died? He died prior to 1733. Is he buried in an unmarked grave near the cemetery near the house site? He was one of the very earliest settlers in this part of what is now Fairfax County. I think much more can be learned from further study of this historic site.

The property was bought by John T. Rigg in 1822. In 1851 his son Charles Rigg sold part of the property to Alexander Buckley, my Great Grandfather, which makes this so interesting to me. There was an old log house on the property in which both my grandmother and father were born.

John T. Rigg died in 1849, and is buried in the cemetery there. Part of his family continued to live there. The son of John T. Rigg, John Thomas Rigg, is shown on the 1878 map of the Centreville District as living at that location. His son, Horace R. Rigg, lived there also (according to Lee Hubbard, who is connected to the family). Horace married Susannah Elizabeth Taylor, the grand-daughter of Daniel Taylor of Orchard Hill in Centreville. Their daughter Maude married Joseph Robinson and lived at Orchard Hill. The Gazetteer shows Joseph Robinson as one of the principal farmers in Centreville in 1884 and 1892. His son,

Denny, lived on the land across from the Centreville Fire House. Son Willis lived nearby, and son Morris lived on West Ox Road. Daniel Taylor was the father of my 3X Great Grandmother, Amelia Ann Taylor.

The Rigg property was sold to John Anderson, whose daughter Geneva married Joseph Buckley, the grandson of Alexander Buckley, and my grandmother's nephew. Their descendants sold the property to Fairfax County.



### Mystery of the Centreville Six: Civil War Trails Marker Dedication

Photo Essay by Paul Hancq

On Saturday, May 18, 2019, people from various local organizations came together to dedicate a new historical marker here in Centreville. The subject was the Centreville Six, which refers to six graves initially discovered in the 1990s at what is now the parking lot of McDonald's restaurant at 5931 Fort Drive, Centreville. At first, the identities of the six people buried there was a mystery, but through a process of forensic examination and historical research, they have been identified as possibly six young soldiers from Massachusetts who died at the Battle of Blackburn's Ford on July 18, 1861. If that is true, they were among the first casualties of the Civil War. The remains were reinterred in Massachusetts, but we now have a marker dedicated to them.



James Lewis welcomed the crowd to this dedication in 19th century clothing. He is a member of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table and was the author of the text of the historical marker.



South Lakes High School JROTC members posted the colors.





Michael Frey was the Sully District Supervisor at the time of the discovery of the Centreville Six. He told us of his involvement in this project.



Kevin Ambrose.



Kevin Ambrose was the individual who discovered the first soldier's grave. He told us the story of discovery, exhumation, recovery, and identification, which took several years. He is shown here speaking at the podium in the parking lot between display boards of photographs related to this story.



Here we see Kevin Ambrose at the end of the taped outlines in the McDonald's parking lot that show approximately where the graves once were.



This is the moment of unveiling of the display board with the image of the historical marker, which was not physically present on site that day but was installed later.

At the end of the dedication, members of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table posed with the display board of the historical marker.



## Women's Suffrage Movement Led to Occoquan Workhouse Imprisonment

by Debbie Robison\*

The Occoquan Workhouse played a central role in the efforts, and ultimate success, of suffragettes seeking the right to vote. Lucy Burns, who, with Alice Paul, founded the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage (which evolved into the National Woman's Party), was an influential leader behind efforts to attract publicity to the woman's suffrage movement. Beginning in January 1917, women from all over the United States picketed President Woodrow Wilson at the White House. Wilson believed that suffrage was state issue, not a national one.

The picketers, arrested by a reluctant police force, initially were released on their own recognizance, and later given short three-day sentences in the District jail. On July 14, 1917, sixteen upper-society women were arrested and sentenced to two months in the District workhouse at Occoquan. Militants, as the picketers were termed, continued to be arrested and sent to the workhouse (some with six-month sentences) through November 1917. Charges faced by the women included inciting unlawful assemblage and obstructing traffic. Two leaders of the National Woman's Party, Lucy Burns and Alice Paul, were imprisoned at the Occoquan workhouse. The courtroom was an opportunity for the suffragettes to speak out:

*As long as women have to go to jail for petty offenses to secure freedom for the*



Alice Paul and Lucy Burns stand as "Silent Sentinels" along the White House fence in 1917.

*women of America, then we will continue to go to jail.*

The imprisoned suffragettes were welcomed to the workhouse by Superintendent Whittaker, who felt they should be treated as any other prisoner. They wore gray one-piece dresses, ate standard prison fare, and were assigned to the sewing room and gardens to work. Whittaker announced that outside communications would be limited:

*Supt. Whittaker announced last night that there will be no visitors for the ladies and they will not be allowed to communicate with any one. They will be permitted to write to their relatives, subject to the jail censorship, and will be allowed to received letters from relatives, of course. If they desire a lawyer, he or she will be allowed to converse with them...*

\* This article has been reproduced, with the author's permission, from the Northern Virginia History Notes Website, [NOVAHistory.org](http://NOVAHistory.org)

Miss Lucy Burns visited the workhouse in August 1917 to investigate the lack of nourishment and poor food. Burns, finding that the women were much thinner and complaining of headaches due to poor and insufficient food, spoke in conference with Illinois Senator J. Hamilton Lewis. Lewis agreed to visit the workhouse to probe the charges.

Charges were filed against Whittaker by a committee of the National Woman's party, headed by Miss Lucy Burns, accusing Whittaker of cruelty to prisoners. Malnutrition resulted in six women being hospitalized. Additionally, an affidavit charged Whittaker with permitting a prisoner to be chained to the walls in a cell of the workhouse. Pending an inquiry, Whittaker was relieved of his duties, but was later reinstated when he was exonerated.

The Board of Charities committee, in a report to commissioners stated:

*From the date of the commitment of the first of the several groups of the National Woman's party to Occoquan a spirit of insubordination, of mischievous agitation and utter disregard of all rules and regulations has been exhibited by them.*

This "insubordination" continued for eleven suffrage pickets who faced solitary confinement unless they rescind their "ultimatum" declaring that they will not work because they are "political prisoners."

Led by Alice Paul and Miss Winslow, sixteen suffragettes began hunger strikes in mid-November. It was reported by National Women's Party members that:

*Mrs. Lawrence Lewis...and Miss Lucy Burns...were removed from Occoquan to jail Tuesday, where they were forcibly fed, Miss Burns by means of a tube through the nose.*

By the end of November 1917, sentences for the suffragettes required that they be sent to the Washington Asylum Jail instead of Occoquan. Some were illegally transferred to the workhouse, but were subsequently returned by court order. Eighteen lawsuits, totaling \$1.2 M, were filed in December by picketers alleging insults, abuse, and false imprisonment. Supervisor Whittaker resigned three months later, and was replaced by Charles C. Foster

On August 26, 1920, the 19th amendment to the Constitution was ratified, giving women the right to vote.



Editor's Supplement: *In 2008 NOVA Parks (Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority) met with the League of Women Voters to offer land for a women's suffrage memorial at Occoquan Regional Park, located near the site of the Occoquan Workhouse. The League agreed and began a fundraising campaign. In 2009 the campaign expanded, with plans for a more elaborate memorial, the Turning Point Suffrage Memorial Committee took the lead and expanded its membership, building partnerships with other organizations and eventually establishing itself as an independent corporation in 2011. In 2010, Fairfax County architect Robert Beach completed plans for the proposed memorial as others began working on creating an interpretation of this critical moment in women's rights history. The memorial design was updated in 2016 and will include a replica of the White House gate where the "Silent Sentinels" stood, and 19 interpretative panels, a rail car to reflect*

*the many miles suffragists travelled campaigning to win votes for women. A memorial garden is also included in the design. To learn more about the memorial and more about the women who struggled to win the right to vote, see the Turning Point Suffrage Memorial website : [www.suffragistmemorial.org](http://www.suffragistmemorial.org).*



Share some history related to Northern Virginia & write for us! Deadlines for submissions are: 1<sup>st</sup> of February, May, August and November. Send to: Cheryl Repetti at [MillraceHCS@gmail.com](mailto:MillraceHCS@gmail.com) . Or by US mail to: The Historic Centreville Society, P.O. Box 1512, Centreville, VA 20122.

**OFFICERS & DIRECTORS**

Paul Hancq, President; Ted McCord, First Vice President; Cheryl Repetti, Second Vice President; Claudette Ward, Secretary; Linda Mellott, Treasurer; Debbie Robison, Michael Frey



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