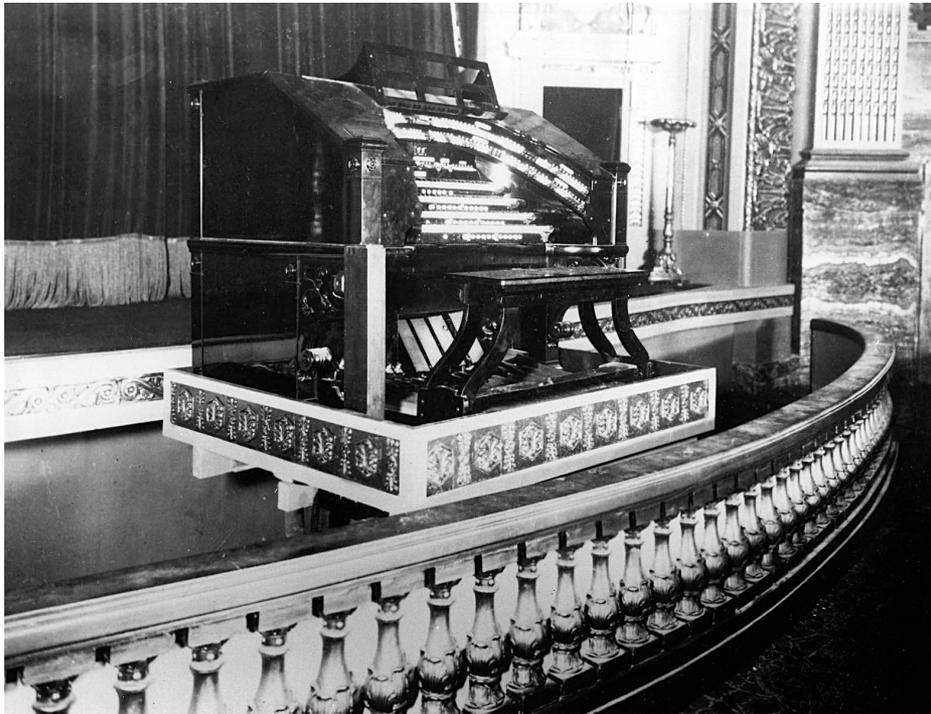


'PRESIDENT LINCOLN VISITS PETERSBURG': Saturday, April 4, 7 p.m., Union Station, Olde Towne Petersburg. Lincoln re-enactor James Hayney will re-create the president's April 3, 1865, meeting with Gen. Grant, portrayed by living-history interpreter Larry Clowers. A reception with Civil War-era music will follow. 804/732-3531 or 804/733-2396.

TOWN & COUNTY FREDERICKSBURG, VA. SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2009 THE FREE LANCE-STAR



BYRD THEATRE

The mighty Wurlitzer organ at the Byrd Theatre is shown in 1928.

BYRD: A big hit with audiences

FROM PAGE 10

me coming back," said Eugene Streett, a regular patron. "I love the sense of community."

That sense of community harks back to a bygone era. In the 1920s and '30s, movie theaters stood at the center of community life, Schall-Vess said. "Before the advent of television, people patronized movie theaters two, three, four times a week," he said.

"They came to watch the news. This is where they saw images of the stock market crash, World War II, travelogues. Today the Byrd is still at the center of community life."

The Byrd offers the community more than second-run movies. It serves as a venue for charity events, birthday parties, weddings and memorial services. It also hosts movie premières, the VCU and University of Richmond French Film Festival, the Environmental Film Festival and the James River Film Festival. And for the movie-history aficionado, the Valentine Richmond History Center periodically gives behind-the-scenes tours of the Byrd.

A group of movie lovers and historical preservationists formed the nonprofit Byrd Theatre Foundation almost six years ago with the mission of preserving the Byrd for future generations. The foundation purchased the theater for \$1.2 million in May 2007.

In addition to paying the monthly \$8,000 mortgage on the building, the foundation is raising money for some restoration work. First on the list: refurbishing the once plush, now lumpy, theater seats.

But despite lumpy seats, people flock to the Byrd to revel in a movie experience unmatched anywhere else in central Virginia.

"The single most wonderful thing about the Byrd is that it is still doing today exactly what it was designed to do 80 years ago," Schall-Vess said. "It functions as a regular, daily movie venue."

Cassie Price oversees the communications and some of the community-outreach programs at the University of Richmond's Bonner Center for Civic Engagement. She also writes freelance articles and enjoys visiting historical and natural sites throughout Virginia. E-mail her in care of gwoolf@freelancestar.com.

MARY: Inheritance key to move

FROM PAGE 7

plan before the death of his first wife to increase his participation in the Principio Company.

In 1736 he returned to England to negotiate a new contract, which would give him a larger share of the company and additional profit from mining and shipping the iron ore from Mary's 600 acres.

This led to the family's relocation once again, in 1738, to enable Augustine to capitalize on his new contract.

Thus it was Mary's inheritance that prompted the family's move to the farm on the Rappahannock River.

Although Augustine's death in 1743 deprived us of his precise plans, it would certainly seem that he intended to forge his career as the Stafford partner in the Principio Company.

But Mary Washington never gave up her ownership of her 600 acres in Stafford County. They were the first item in her will, written in 1788, as a bequest to her son George.

"[James Withers] was told by William Bassel who is now dead many years ago that he had seen Mrs. Washington inquiring the way to John Honey's to get rent from him but this deponent did not understand that she succeeded . . . He also states that he saw a certain Robert Smith (who is also dead) going to Mrs. Washington's to purchase the land of her & was afterward informed she could not find the title papers."

—Excerpt from deposition taken in 1808 at the tavern of William Bell in Falmouth. From the lawsuit *Dejarnette vs Suddoth &c.* Recorded 1810, Collection CR-SC-H, Record ID 90-18, City of Fredericksburg. Courtesy Barry L. McGhee, archivist, Fredericksburg Circuit Court

Paula S. Felder of Fredericksburg is a historian and author specializing in the area's 18th-century past. Marian McCabe, editorial and research associate, contributed to this article. E-mail Felder in care of gwoolf@freelancestar.com.

NEXT WEEK: *The Rappahannock Farm*

CIVIL WAR NOTES

Ellwood interpreter training, today, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., held at Ellwood. This is training for veteran interpreters. New volunteers must attend one of the veteran sessions. Greg Mertz, National Park Service supervisory historian, will conduct the training. Interpreters must commit to once-a-month service during the Ellwood season of May through October. Carolyn Elstner. 540/373-6240 or MElstner@aol.com.

"Voices From the Storm: Spotsylvania's Great Trial," today, 5 and 7 p.m., Historic Massaponax Baptist Church, Jefferson Davis Highway (U.S. 1) and Massaponax Church Road, Spotsylvania. Using a vivid historic setting, music, images and the words of the people who lived here, both slave and free, members of the community, Massaponax Baptist Church and the National Park Service will tell this story. Free. 540/898-0021.

Civil War Preservation Trust Park Day 2009, Saturday, April 4, 9 a.m.; Wilderness Battlefield Exhibit Shelter, State Route 20, two miles west of State Route 3; Graffiti House, 19484 Brandy Road, Brandy Station. Volunteers needed to help

clean up and repair facilities, exhibits and grounds of Wilderness battlefield and Brandy Station. Volunteers receive a T-shirt and Scouts receive a patch. Bring work gloves. Rain date is April 18. Wilderness: 540/972-2844 or e-mail craigraings@hotmail.com. Brandy Station: 540/727-7718 or e-mail rdeardoff@fcps1.org.

Battlefield tours, Saturday, April 4, 10 a.m.-noon, Graffiti House, 19484 Brandy Road, Brandy Station. Tour Beverly Ford and St. James Church in a personal-vehicle caravan. Some walking necessary. \$10 per person. No reservations required. 540/825-4379.

"The Good Fight—H.P. Goddard's Accounts of Civil War and Peace," Monday, April 13, Brock's Riverside Grill, 508 Sophia St., downtown Fredericksburg. The monthly meeting of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table is open to the public. Calvin Zon will be the speaker. Social 6:30 p.m., dinner 7 p.m., lecture 7:30 p.m. Reservations required for dinner only at rvcwrt.org.

—Compiled by Carol Lee