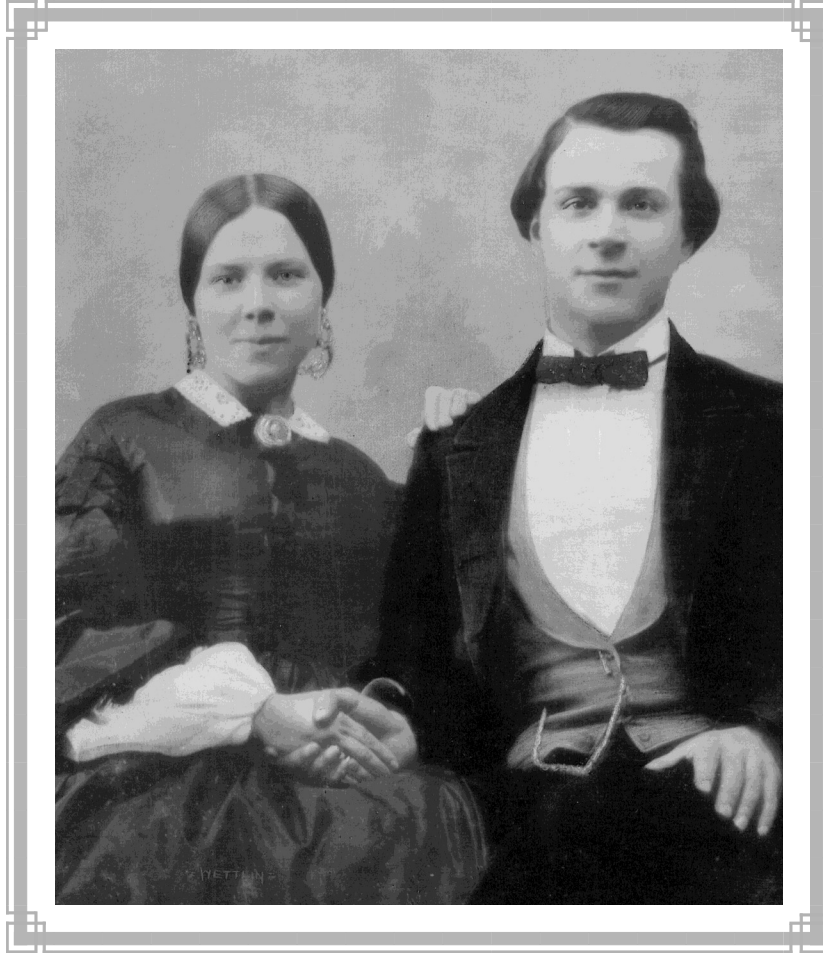


Masthead

Volume 21, Issue 2

June, 2012



Mr. & Mrs. William Samuel Shepherd, 1859

A Tale of War

This is a story that was played out in many variations all over the South from 1861 to 1865.

Diana Virginia McGuire (b. 1838) grew up in Suffolk, daughter of William Henry and Maria Riddick McGuire and the granddaughter of Mills and Mary Taylor Riddick who built Riddick's Folly about the time Diana was born.

William Shepherd was born in 1830 at Mintonsville, his mother's family plantation in Nansemond County. He was the son of Thomas Swepson Shepherd and his wife, Ann Eliza Browne Shepherd, of Farmer's Delight near present day Magnolia.

William (Billie) Shepherd and Diana McGuire were married on May 26, 1859. They lived in Norfolk briefly while he worked as a bookkeeper and then they moved to Murfreesboro, North Carolina. His occupation there is not known but Murfreesboro was a busy little port on the Meherrin River with a fair number of mercantile establishments, as well as some very reputable private schools. In 1860 their first child, Ada Browne Shepherd, was born and the next year brought a son, William Samuel, Jr.



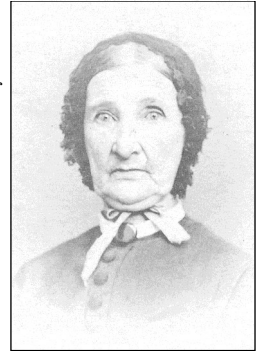
William Shepherd (1830-1862) shown as a little boy. Work attributed to the Suffolk artist Oliver Perry Copeland. Original portrait now at Riddick's Folly.

Billie Shepherd Goes to War

Diana suffered from rheumatism from an early age and was sometimes bedridden. Billie was a solicitous husband. However, on May 16, 1861, he enlisted in the Hertford County Grays, Co. F, 1st Regiment 1st NC Inf. By December 8, 1861, the Grays were in Stafford County, Virginia. A portion of a letter Lt. Shepherd wrote to his sister follows.

*Accokent. P.O.
Stafford Co Va
Sunday Dec 8. 1861
My Dear Family*

Maria Taylor Riddick McGuire (1816-1883) was the daughter of Mills & Mary Taylor Riddick and mother of Diana McGuire Shepherd.

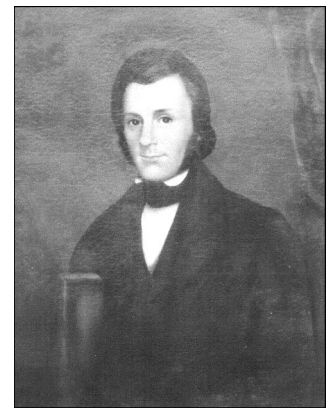


In my letter to Aunt Lizzie I promised to write you when I arrived in camp. Well I arrived here this morning at 9 o'clock and feel considerably improved in health, though by no means entirely well. I left home on Friday morning last. Di was not well, was suffering with Rheumatism in her shoulders, and had been confined to her bed several days. Sweet little Ada and Walter were very well. . . .

There is nothing new here in the way of news. Everything is quiet just at this time. We are however expecting an attack on Evansport and we may be ordered off in a short time. I never was so tired of hearing talk of a fight in my life. I do sincerely wish the yankees would give us a chance. I want to be in a battle just to see how I will feel—our Regiment I think is composed of good fighting stock and I am certain will do good service when they have an opportunity. — I must now bring my note to a close. Hoping you will let me hear from you often. My love to Dear Aunt Lizzie, Uncle Simon, Grand Pa and all. Accept much love for yourself and believe me as ever,

Your Very Affectionate
Brother — Billie

In February of 1862 Roanoke Island fell to the Union giving them free access to the sounds and rivers of Eastern North Carolina. Lt. Shepherd and the Hertford County Grays had moved to Goldsboro, North Carolina. He wrote the following letter to his uncle Simon Stubbs. Apparently Billie's wife and children had traveled to Fredericksburg to be near him. They would soon be with his uncle Simon in Richmond.



Thomas Swepson Shepherd (1811-1860), father of Lt. Shepherd

Goldsboro N.C.

March 28, 1862

My dear Uncle,

Our whole Brigade composed of the 1st N.C. 2nd N.C. 3rd N.C. 30th Virginia 3rd Arkansas [sic] and Cookes Virginia Artillery has been removed from the Potomac to this place. We are preparing to give Mr. Burnside a warm reception should he attempt to come this way. There are a great many troops here and more are arriving by every train.

We have been without our tents for more than a week exposed to all kinds of weather. We are encamped on a beautiful spot and when we get our tents, cooking implements life will be quite contented. Our Brigade is commanded by Genl. Walker from Missouri. Genl. T.H. Holmes (Maj. ____) who commanded our division on the Potomac has been sent here and is chief director in this section.

I have written this letter more for the purpose of letting you know where I am than anything else. When we get fixed I will endeavour to write again. Please excuse this hasty note. Paper of this kind is worth \$1.50 a quire here. My family expected to leave Fredericksburg on Wednesday last. I have not heard from them since I left them there more than a week ago. My respects to all enquiring friends. Accept a good deal of love for yourself. Excuse the haste in which I have written and believe me



Ann Eliza Browne Shepherd, (1815-1851), mother of Lt. Shepherd

The portraits of Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Shepherd are believed to have been done by Oliver Perry Copeland.

*Your Very Devoted Nephew
W. S. Shepherd*

The Bloodiest Day of the War

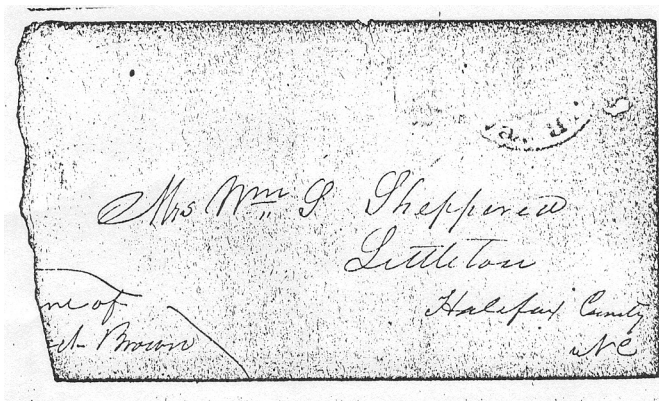
While the surviving letters written by William S. Shepherd to his family have a positive tone, he was certainly not unaware of the possibility that he would never return to home and family. That will be made obvious later.

By September of 1862 Co. F, 1st N.C. Regiment was back in northern Virginia and crossed the Potomac into Maryland with General Lee. On September 17 they were met by McClellan and a much larger Union force. Tragically, the end came for Lt. Shepherd along with so many others that day at Antietam.

Remembering the war 30 years later in the *Murfreesboro Index*, Thomas D. Boone wrote of that day at Sharpsburg:

Lt. Shepherd, L.C. Lawrence and I had squatted down just to the rear of Co. F., a bullet from the enemy's line struck Lt. S. somewhere about the heart and that noble spirit in an instant "crossed over the river." He had come to Murfreesboro a stranger a few months before the war and, in that short time had, by his nobility of Spirit and fine manners, endeared himself to all with whom he came in contact. Elected 1st Lt. almost by unanimity, he had _____, he was lost to his beloved wife and young children who so much needed his labors of love"

More than a week later the following letter was written to Diana Shepherd, one of many such letters, one imagines, written by Capt. Harrell following that bloody day at Antietam Creek near Sharpsburg. Diana Shepherd and her children were, by then, refu-geeing with family near Littleton, North Carolina.



Camp near Martinsburg, Va.
Sept. 25th 1862

Mrs. Shepperd [sic]

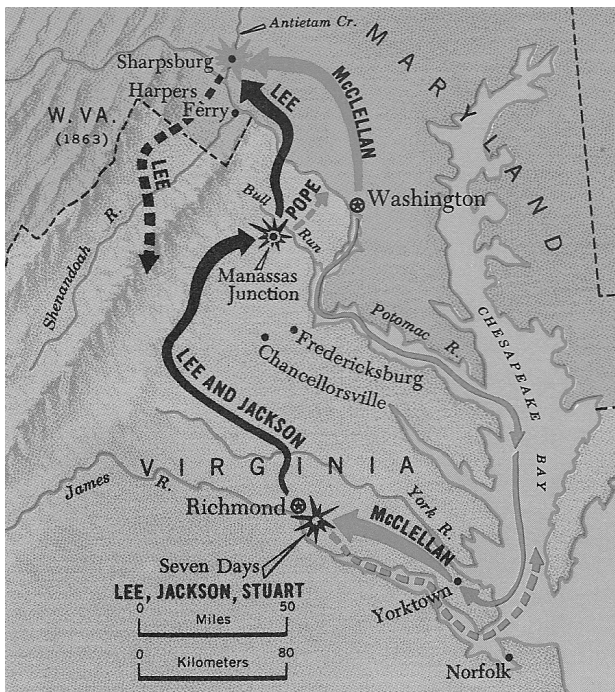
I am under the painful necessity of writing to you informing you of the death of Leut. Shepperd. He was killed in the battle at Sharpsburg in Md. on the 17th inst. I could not get his remains they fell in the hands of the Yankees their force was so very large we had to fall back and cross the Potomac in Va. He died a noble death in defence [sic] of his country I regret his loss very much but we must make sacrifices. I think he left his things with his uncle in Richmond.

Very respectfully
I.N. Harrell Capt
Co. F 1st N.C. Regt.

• • • • •

"On September 4 General Lee crossed the Potomac into Maryland with 40,000 picked troops, confident of victory. On September 17, at Sharpsburg near Antietam Creek, Lee engaged McClellan's force of 70,000 troops and was stopped. The Battle of Antietam was the bloodiest single day of the War. Both sides were so exhausted that McClellan did not try to pursue the Confederates and win a decisive victory."

Map and quote from *Rise of the American Nation*.



Years Later — A Voice from the Grave

William Shepherd had a younger brother, James Shepherd, who, at the start of the War, was not quite 14. He claimed to be 18 and joined the 16th Virginia infantry. Early in September of 1862, nine days before Antietam, his age was revealed and he was discharged.

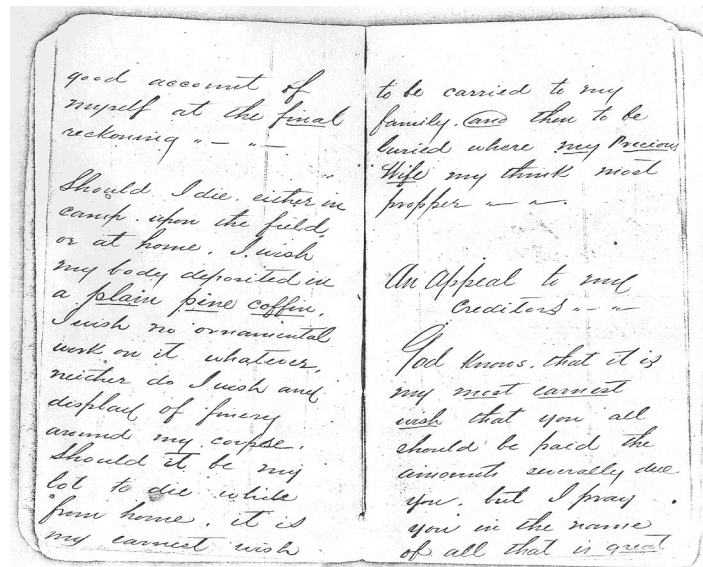
James Shepherd went on to attend the University of North Carolina and to become a lawyer in North Carolina and eventually Justice then Chief Justice on the State Supreme Court, a post he held for three years.

In 1886, twenty-four years after Antietam, an acquaintance of his met a Mr. McNie, a former Union soldier. Somehow the name of Shepherd was mentioned and McNie, a resident of Winona, Minnesota, made known that he had Lt. William Shepherd's journal or as he called it a *memorandum*. McNie sent the journal to Judge Shepherd on November 3, 1886. He wrote of William Shepherd (it was he who omitted punctuation):

I don't think he realized anything after he was hurt he was buried I think the 3rd day after he was wounded the memorandum was all that he had on his person when I found him he laid all of one day and a night in front of me on the picket line his sword and sash was gone I think some of the 49th New York has his sword & sash"

McNie went on to say where he thought Lt. Shepherd was buried. James Shepherd sent the journal not to Lt. Shepherd's widow, but to his own sister, Fanny, who accepted the sad duty of writing to Diana, the widow, and sending her the journal. Shepherd wrote to his sister Fanny, "I am not hopeful of finding his remains but will not cease in my efforts until I have exhausted every means."

The journal may have opened old wounds but it said so much about the man and his faith and his deep love for his family.



Should I die, either in camp, upon the field, or at home, I wish my body deposited in a plain pine coffin. I wish no ornamentation work on it whatever, neither do I wish any display of finery around my corpse. Should it be my lot to die while from home, it is my earnest wish to be carried to my family and then to be buried where my precious Wife may think most proper.

An Appeal to my Creditors -

God knows that it is my most earnest wish that you all should be paid the amounts severally due you, but I pray you in the name of all that is great and holy that in case it would take all I have to pay the debts, do not I ajure [sic] you leave entirely penniless a widow and two fatherless children. The amounts are all small and none of you would ever feel the loss,

were you even to withdraw your claims entirely. Oh! I do most earnestly entreat you, for humanity's sake, not to sell everything and leave my family without home, without food. It fills my heart with the very greatest anguish when I think of this. Do remember that I left home, family, friends, all, to battle for the liberty and independence of our blessed country—do let the spark of humanity that must be in every man's heart burst into a flame and at once say that you will do your part toward relieving the helpless.

May God bless you all, and at last receive you at his right hand in heaven, is the sincere prayer of

Your Friend Truly,
W. S. Shepherd

"Camp Bee" near "Brook's
Station" Stafford Co Va
Sunday Sept 1, 1861

On the night before he died, William Shepherd wrote the following in of his journal, seen here as it was copied from a transcription by one of his descendants.

Sept. 16, '62
I feel that the good Lord
of mercy will protect and
bless me in the battle that
I am about to enter - In Him
do I put my whole trust.
I lean on Him for mercy and
support - should I die, I have
a hope of being happy in
another world -



Lt. William Samuel Shepherd (1830-1862)

A recent conversation with park personnel at Antietam National Battlefield confirmed that most Confederates were buried in mass graves. Some were later moved to two Confederate cemeteries nearby.

There is a stone for Lt. Shepherd at Cedar Hill Cemetery.



Diana

What happened to Diana McGuire Shepherd and her children? Her husband's parents had died before the War. Perhaps she returned to Suffolk to live with her parents, Maria and William Henry McGuire. She herself lived a relatively short life plagued by poor health. Diana Shepherd died in December 1888. She was 50 years old.

SUFFOLK LOCALS.
—Died Saturday evening, after a week's illness, at the residence of her son-in-law, Mr. Burwell Riddick, on Saratoga street, Mrs. Diana Virginia Shepherd, wife of the late Lieutenant Wm. Shepherd, of Murfreesboro, N. C., and sister-in-law of Judge James Shepherd, of North Carolina. This gentle, refined Christian lady has been confined to the house almost continuously for four or five years with weakness, impaired sight and speech from paralysis, bearing it with such faith and Christian fortitude until the final stroke came Saturday week, which culminated in her death, as we have said. We sympathize deeply with the bereaved ones. Her funeral, which was preached by Rev. F. J. Boggs, was held Sunday evening at the Methodist Church. The following gentlemen acted as pall-bearers: Col. T. W. Smith, H. E. Smith, P. B. Prentis, H. Artman, M. Jones, B. F. Cutchin, R. L. Brewer, and R. W. Baker, undertaker. The remains were buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery.



Willie & Ada Shepherd, 1867

... and the Children

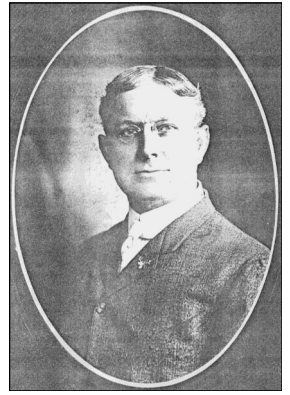
The Shepherd's son **William Samuel Shepherd, Jr.** (1861-1949) lived his adult life away from Suffolk and we lack information about him.

In 1882 William and Diana Shepherd's daughter, **Ada Browne Shepherd** (1860-1936), married Burwell Riddick, a native of Beaufort County, North Carolina. He came to Suffolk and made a successful career, alone and later with their son Burwell, as an architect and builder.

Ada Browne Shepherd and Burwell Riddick were the parents, too, of **Fanny Shepherd Riddick**, a sharp businesswoman who co-owned an early car dealership in Suffolk. (See our July 2011 issue.)

A son, **George Paine Riddick**, became a successful commercial artist whose painting of the old City Market has been reproduced by SNHS. He was also one of the artists featured in a 2010 exhibit that we assisted in presenting at Riddick's Folly.

Another of the Burwell Riddick children was **Virginia Browne Riddick (Brownie)** who married Henry A. Rawles. Their son, Henry A. Rawles, Jr., also an artist featured in the above-

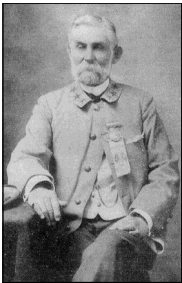


Above, right: William Samuel Shepherd, Jr. (Willie), early 20th century; and Ada Browne Shepherd in 1880

Diana Shepherd's Pallbearers

The men who were chosen as pallbearers for Diana McGuire Shepherd in 1888 are a lesson in Suffolk history themselves.

Col. T.W. Smith was the son of Somerton innkeeper Washington Smith who entertained General Lafayette on his trip through Suffolk in 1825. Tom Smith served in the 16th Virginia Infantry, Co. A, Mahone's Brigade. After the War he came to Suffolk and became a success in the real estate business. He gave the Confederate monument that was unveiled in 1889. The local chapter of Sons of Confederate Veterans is named for him.



Col. T.W. Smith

Henning Ezekiel Smith, known as "Pomp" Smith, was a Confederate veteran, having served in the 13th Va. Cav., Co. I. He was one of the owners of the Dismal Swamp canal boat the *Jennie Wilson* named for his daughter.



In background: Canal boat Jennie Wilson

Peter B. Prentis, longtime Clerk of Court of Nansemond County, was, according to legend, held hostage by the Union Army during the Union occupation of Suffolk. He would die and be interred in Cedar Hill less than three months after Diana Shepherd died.

Hiram Townsend Artman, perhaps the one known as Mr. Townie Artman, was a Confederate veteran, having served with the 3rd Va. Cav., Co. A.

Marmaduke Jones was a Confederate veteran, having served with the 14th and 41st Va. Inf., Co. A. His son Frank was married to Mr. Pomp Smith's daughter. Father and son owned M. Jones and Son, a gentleman's clothing store.

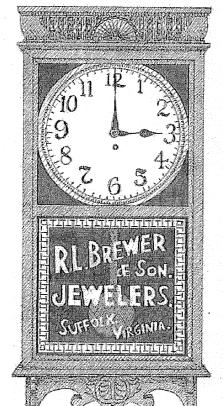


From a receipt dated August 3, 1887

B.F. Cutchin was a tailor who had served with the 16th Va. Inf., Co. A.

R.L. Brewer was the first mayor of Suffolk and first superintendent of schools. He started R.L. Brewer & Son Jewelry Company, a fixture in Suffolk life for more than a century.

R. W. Baker, the undertaker, was in 1888 relatively new in town and to the business of being a furniture dealer and undertaker. He would, no doubt, be pleased to know that his descendants still own and operate his undertaking business more than a century later.



Postscript to our October 2011 issue, School Days in Nansemond County

From *Civil Government of Virginia* (1898 & 1904), provided by member Edith Seiling:

“Teachers Every teacher must be examined by the division Superintendent, receive a certificate of qualification and sign a written contract before taking charge of a school For the better equipment of teachers for their work, the General Assembly has made provision for a number of summer Normal Schools which are held annually.”

SNHS note: We know of at least one teacher who started her career as a teenager in the 1920s after attending (now called) Longwood University for one year. But she attended summer school at the University of Virginia for years and years.

“Pupils Pupils between the ages of seven and twenty years may attend the public schools free of cost. Persons between the ages of twenty and twenty-five are admitted if they pay a tuition fee. An enrollment of at least twenty pupils, with a reasonable assurance of an average daily attendance of that number, is required to constitute a free public school. White and colored children are taught in separate schools but under the same general regulations as to management, usefulness and efficiency.”

Postscripts to our March 2012 issue, Stopping at Myrtle

- On the map Civil War in the March issue, readers will have noticed the almshouse or poorhouse on Poorhouse Road. Our Civil War tour guide Kermit Hobbs showed us that the poorhouse complex is still standing on that road now called Indian Trail. Reportedly, the poorhouse was used into the 1930s. This, of course, preceded the welfare programs of the Roosevelt administration that continue today, making the poorhouse history.

From Smith’s *Civil Government of Virginia* (1898 & 1904):

“Almshouses Every county and corporation [incorporated city?] is required to make provisions for the needy. The county poorhouse is generally on a farm furnished by the county.”



Two of the buildings in the poorhouse complex, photographed by Dana Adams

- SNHS member Clyde March recognized his mother Maude Holland (March Ashburn) on the cover of the issue. She taught in Myrtle during the 1920s.





Photos thanks to Julie Johnson and Nita Bagnell

News from the Phillips-Dawson House

- Thanks for your help with the Heirloom Sale. We cleared about \$1000 for the work on the house and we're still selling things. Of course, we always want to do better but every bit helps.
- Thanks to **John Harrell** for overseeing plaster repairs and painting in the sunroom and dining room and to **Robert Baker** for scraping many layers of paint off the dining room mantel to prepare it for a new finish. What a great improvement. Your generous contributions to the Phillips-Dawson House made the paint and plaster work possible.
- **LW's Lawn Service** cuts our grass twice a month during the summer as a gift. Recently, they were hired by **Doug Kincaid** to do additional work: trimming hedges, weeding and mulching the Phillips-Dawson House beds. Doug has also planted some annuals and perennials in the yard. We greatly appreciate all these yard improvements.
- In April a number of members and guests enjoyed a talk by Edith Seiling and Peggy Lefler about Gates County/Somerton area cabinetmaker Joseph Freeman. Attendees enjoyed seeing examples of his work from the early 19th century. Those present also viewed a mid 19th century plantation desk from the South Quay/Holy Neck area donated by member **Clyde March**.
- More recently, Nansemond County native **Brian Wills** spoke about his latest book, *George Henry Thomas, As True as Steel*. He sold and signed books including and especially *The War Hits Home* about the Civil War in Suffolk and Nansemond County.



Left: Edith Seiling, Peggy Lefler and Sue Woodward with a document box by Joseph Freeman.
Bottom: Edith speaks to SNHS members and guests.
Photos thanks to Miley Walker



Right, top: Brian Wills signs books for Susan Garrett and for Bill Lynch whose ancestor fought under Gen. Thomas.
Right: Student members Emily Bazemore and Nary Seng donned costumes for the occasion. Photos thanks to John Johnson





Grandfather Shepherd's Birthplace, Mintonville, Va.

Mintonville is in Nansemond County about 6 miles from Suffolk and not far from Wilroy on a long lane that bears off to the left when going from Suffolk. The road marker is Upton Lane. It was the ancestral home of the Mintons and Shepherds. It was given to Ann Eliza Browne Shepherd by her uncle, Col. John Minton. . . . *Written by Virginia Browne Riddick Rawles, c. 1975.* NOTE: Though it has undergone changes since this photo was taken in the early 20th century, the house still stands off Nansemond Parkway.

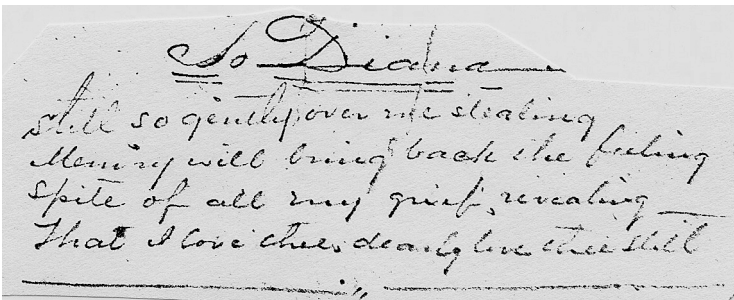
We regret the poor quality of some of the photographs in this issue but we felt the pictures were too important to be omitted.

Return address/logo

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Return Service Request-

*To Diana
Still so gently over me stealing
Memory will bring back the feeling
Spite of all my grief revealing
That I love thee dearly love thee still*



From the journal of Lt. William S. Shepherd, CSA