



PRESERVE PORT

Newsletter of The Society of Port Republic Preservationists, Inc. February 2007

8691 Water Street P.O. Box 82

Port Republic VA 24471

www.heritagecenter.com/SPRP

Passing the Baton

A personal word from Anita Cummins

In the world of sports, the phrase "passing the baton" means handing over responsibility for the next leg of the race to another teammate, someone stronger and more energetic. And it's my time to do just that.

For the past 27 years, I have worked relentlessly toward the goals of the Society: to preserve the history of Port Republic, to foster community spirit, and to keep Port a nice place to live.

My many hours of service have not been completely selfless, for no one can imagine how much joy I have gained in this work: finding a new artifact, learning a new bit of history, seeing the Museum become a reality, achieving the publication of the May manuscript, seeing the battlefields receive national protection, etc.

During this time, the whole area has become more attractive, property values increased. In the village itself, almost every house has been renovated, restored, or renewed. Once, one couldn't tell that Riverside Graveyard existed, because it was so overgrown with brush and honeysuckle. Most of our early workdays were spent picking up garbage and trash. Historic sites weren't marked; few people knew about the history of Port.

Before my arrival, the pursuit of the dream of preservation had begun. We owe a debt to those charter members, to those who have worked tirelessly since then and to those who are still unselfishly giving their time and support. There is still much work to be done.

This coming summer will be my time to bow out as Brownie and I are selling our home in Port, Cloverdale, and moving away from the area. But I relinquish my duties with confidence. On the SPRP Board, and in our community, there are young, capable and caring people who will carry on. I know that a place as special as Port Republic will always have a few people who are dedicated to preserving it and its history.

Port and its people will always have a place in my heart. Thanks to all of you for your support.

Anita Cummins

Project Stalled But Not "Canned"

We are pleased with the enthusiastic response to our planned project of preserving history of the Harrison Bateman Barn (Alexander Cannery).

But we've encountered a number of delays: applying for a building permit, seeking a special use permit requiring approval of the County Board of Supervisors, hiring an engineer to do an elevation evaluation... Now adapting our proposal to meet the guidelines. But we're working on it.

New Board Member

At our January meeting, we welcomed Sheila Higgins as a new ad hoc member to the SPRP Board. Sheila is a long-time member of the community and we look forward to having her onboard.

Mark your calendar for 2007

- March 17: 9:00 a.m. SPRP Workday for spring cleaning
- March 24: Rain date for workday
- April 1: Museum opens for the season (Sundays 1:30-4 p.m.)
- June 8-10: 5th Virginia reenactors in camping in the village
- July 7: SVBF Kids' Camp at Widow Pence Farm
- July 15: 5:00 p.m. Community picnic in Melvin Bradburn Park
- Nov. 19: 7:00 p.m. Membership meeting for the election of Board members
- Dec. 16: 5:00 p.m. Lighting the Community Christmas Tree

News in Brief

We mourn the death of John Heatwole. He was a super historian, preservationist, artist, and a truly good friend. We (and all the Valley) will miss him.

Christmas on the Village Green, a biennial affair, was successful as usual. More than 80 visitors enjoyed the hospitality of "open houses". Our thanks to all our homes' hosts and to Amy Robertson for leading our Singalong at the Church.

The request for expansion of the Mining Operation in Port was tabled by the County Board of Supervisors. We are confident that their wisdom will prevail.

It's a New Year! Please send in your **membership dues for 2007** (unless you have paid in advance.) Thanks.

Got Time? We invite the assistance of anyone who wants to volunteer in our efforts: writing our newsletter, hosting the Museum, transcribing documents, secretarial work, house-cleaning, yard work, keeping our database of information, helping with lunches for tour groups, and on and on. There's a task for everyone. (Call Carol at 249-5689)

"Shenandoah Shunpiking", a CD Audio Tour of Civil War History in our area, is a "dream come true". Produced by the Cross Keys/Goods Mill Historical Society, with an SVBF grant, the CD details the action of Confederate and Union armies in our area and the stories of the people here who were affected.

(To purchase a copy, send a check for \$19.95 to Cross Keys/Goods Mill Historical Society, 6601 New Haven Road, Port Republic, VA 24471, or order online at www.two-rivers.com/shunpike.)

Remember the Past---Preserve for the Future

Board of Directors: Tom Aycock, Anita Cummins, Kevin Gabel, Tamara Gibson, Sherry Gordon, Sheila Higgins, Ellen Kaylor, James Oppy, Carol Poulson, Peggy Richardson, Wayne Smith, Joe Solometo, and Frances Wilkerson.

Wonderful Photo copies were received during a visit by Pauline (Polly) Bateman Diehl and her daughter, Kitty Baker, of Charlottesville. We enjoyed the visit and truly appreciate receiving copies of old photographs of the Bateman and Diehl families...including our first ever glimpse of Harrison Bateman (1812-1889) and his first wife, Martha Ann May Bateman (1822-1863)



Harrison Bateman



Martha Ann May Bateman

A Bit of Port History...a 1933 Port Homecoming

The following letter was sent by Elmo Allen Bateman to his sister Nannie Bateman Dinsmore in Port Republic. Elmo was born in 1869 and married to Elizabeth Patterson. He was the son of Wm. Harrison Bateman and Annie Etta Moore Bateman, and the grandson of Harrison Bateman and Martha Ann May Bateman. We do not know what sort of "homecoming" was being planned, nor who the "committee" represented.

*Danbury Connecticut
May 11, 1933*

Dear Sister

I regret more than I can tell you that I am compelled to inform you that it will be impossible for me to be present at the HOMECOMING DAY at Old Port on May 15 on account of not being able to get away from work; and not only that, I am not feeling very good for some time but would not let that stand in the way for I feel that I would be amply repaid for going as I am sure you are going to have one of the best times that Port has ever seen and to meet the people who will be there would be a pleasure too great to mention.

Well, life is made up of disappointments and we have to make the best of them no matter how much they hurt. On that day my thoughts will be with you even though I can't be there in person and trust that you will have one Grand Good Day.

Now in conclusion, I want to thank you for the kind invitation and ask you convey same to the rest of the Committee for their kind thoughts of me; and would like to propose THREE CHEERS FOR OLD PORT REPUBLIC and may she ever remain just what she has always been to me: one of the Dearest and most lovely spots on God's Green Earth.

*Your Bro
Elmo*

Be a Part of Something Good! Join the Society of Port Republic Preservationists!

SPRP is a non-profit organization All members are invited to meet the third Monday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at the Museum.

I enclose \$25 for membership 2007 through 2009. _____ or, I enclose \$10 for family membership for 2007. _____

I enclose an annual tax-exempt gift of \$ _____

Name _____ Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Make checks payable to SPRP and mail to SPRP, P.O. Box 82, Port Republic, VA 24471)