



NEWS AND NOTES

from

The Fauquier Historical Society

Vol. 3, No. 4

WARRENTON, VIRGINIA

Fall 1981



Photo courtesy Mrs. Thomas P. Harney

Airlie as it appeared in 1924, before it was destroyed by fire.

AIRLIE

When Harry Connelly Groome purchased a large tract of rolling Fauquier County land in 1899, he immediately began construction of the house he would call Airlie. The name is derived from Airlie Castle in Scotland which Mr. Groome visited while playing golf at St. Andrews. This choice of name demonstrates as clearly as the architecture Mr. Groome's sensitivity to the relationship between Virginia and Great Britain.

A broad avenue winds from the stone entrance and iron gates through a tree-lined park bordered by dry-stone walls to the

house. The apparently natural flow of the land contrasts strongly with the formal grandeur of the house and recalls "Capability" Brown's work at many English great houses of the eighteenth century.

Grandeur and grace characterized the house. It rose three stories on an irregular floor plan, but the visual impression was one of symmetry and balance. Horizontals slightly dominated the verticals and enhanced the image of permanence and grandeur. Each row of windows gave a subtle horizontal which was reinforced by the strongly projecting hip roof and widow's walk or balustrade.

To offset these impressive horizontals, tall chimneys rose above the roof and delicate verticals emerged in the form of downspouts. The facade was divided into three sections, the central one being substantially broader than the sides. The central section was dominated by an elegant entrance which reflected the American Georgian adaptation of eighteenth century English Palladianism. An oval fanlight pierced the broken triangular pediment supported by Ionic pillars. Above the doorway on the second floor three windows placed

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Airlie

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Dues are as follows:

Individual or Family Membership	\$10.00 per year
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Can You Help?

News and Notes will contain in each issue a list of as many persons as possible who are conducting historical or genealogical research on persons or places related to Fauquier County. To be included in this column, write the Fauquier Historical Society, P. O. Box 675, Warrenton, VA 22186. Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.

LEE. Mrs. Jackie Lee, 1720 Kassabien Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89104 is seeking information connecting Willis and Sarah Lee, who may have migrated to Athens Co., Ohio early in the 1800's, with the Lees of Virginia. They were parents of Charles Lee, b. Jan. 31, 1813.

FANNING/PALMER. Mrs. Eugenie Fellows, 21 Williams Blvd., Zephyrhills, FL 33599 is seeking information on Joseph Fanning, b. Jan. 14, 1794, Fauquier, and Henry L. Fanning, b. Sept. 6, 1828, Fauquier, d. July 28, 1898 Iroquois Co., Ill. Also information on Lucy Palmer who married Joseph July 30, 1817 in Fauquier. Lucy was daughter of John Palmer of Virginia.

ROSSER/DODD. Mrs. Lewis Rosser, 19651 S. Sundrest Ave., West Linn, OR is seeking information on the parentage of James Nevil Rosser. He married Hannah Dodd, daughter of Nathaniel Dodd, in Fauquier Jan. 6, 1809. Mrs. Rosser would also like information on any children of this marriage.

URTON. Col. Bud Urton AF (RET), 3344 S. Arville St., #46, Las Vegas, NV 89102 is searching for information on William Urton who was 53 years old in 1850. The 1920 Virginia census shows a William Urton and John Urton in Fauquier.

ELLIOTT/BURGESS. Mrs. Shirley Vaughan, 1209 Apache, Wichita, KA 67207 is seeking information on William Elliott, b. Prince William, 1740, m. in Fauquier, 1763. Served in Am. Rev. from Loudoun Co., and died there. Also information on Frances Burgess who lived in Fauquier (no date given).

CORRECTION

Printer's error: Vol. 3. No. 3, page 4.

Treasurer's Annual Report: Under Income delete "Balance". General Admission should read \$1,709.00

close together filled the entire central section. Each side section of the facade contained a free adaptation of a Palladian window on the first floor and a more austere version above.

Although the facade of Airlie was not copied from any particular structure, it strongly recalls "Mount Pleasant", an important eighteenth century house in Philadelphia. Like Airlie, it is a three-storied house with hip roof, dormer windows, and tall chimneys flanking a widow's walk. Both houses are vine-covered brick and stone. Mount Pleasant is plastered and Airlie is stuccoed but with the same effect. One wonders if Mr. Groome, consciously or unconsciously, was pulling together the threads of his own heritage - England, Philadelphia, and Virginia.

For almost twenty-five years Airlie housed the Groome family and welcomed numerous guests. Then on Monday, October 20, 1924, a fire destroyed the entire house. Mr. Groome rebuilt on the same foundation and in much the same style, but the new house is only two stories and has other, more minor differences. The interior remained essentially the same as the floor plan was repeated. According to The Fauquier Democrat (October 24, 1924), Airlie "was much more than a 'show place', it was a lovely and hospitable home, endeared by long and happy association, not only to its owners but to many others in the community." And this tradition of hospitality continued as long as Mr. Groome lived.

Today, Airlie is owned by the Airlie Foundation. It serves as a conference center, welcoming visitors from around the world to a gracious and serene setting by preserving both the spirit of hospitality and the physical structure of the house.

- Aileen H. Laing



Profile: Harry Connelly Groome

Harry Connelly Groome was a Renaissance man and, like such individuals, his interests were many. He was an historian, poet, sportsman, soldier, dedicated church member, and a successful farmer, who introduced at least one new strain of livestock and developed a cure for Virginia ham which is still used by family and friends. Mr. Groome was born in Philadelphia in 1860 and, after attending the University of Pennsylvania, he joined his father in J. F. Bailey and Co., the iron commission merchants. In 1884 he and his brother bought a 700-acre estate, "Locust Hill", in Wythe County, Virginia where they raised mules. Harry Groome went back to Philadelphia in 1889, but Virginia was in his blood and in 1899 he returned, this time to Fauquier County.

In 1899 Harry Groome and his new wife, the former Anne Louise Wright, also of Philadelphia, bought property near Warrenton. According to their daughter, Susan (now Mrs. Thomas P. Harney), her father yearned to return to Virginia but her mother was opposed to living in such a remote place as Wythe County. Fauquier was an ideal compromise and the house they built on their new estate, Airlie, demonstrated Mr. Groome's true understanding of Virginia's history and her English heritage.



Harry Connelly Groome

In the decade Mr. Groome was in Philadelphia before settling in Virginia he continued to expand his interests. He introduced golf to Philadelphia while he was resident secretary of the Philadelphia Club and was also instrumental in bringing polo to the city, serving as captain of the first team. He was a member of the First City Troop and in 1896 became Assistant Adjutant General of the First Brigade Pennsylvania National Guard with the rank of major. The following year the publication of his *Military Handbook* for use by the National Guard launched his literary career while his military career culminated in service during the Spanish-American War of 1898.

Soon Mr. Groome was immersed in the life of the county. In 1902 he organized the Fauquier Club and was its president in 1905. He was a staunch member of St. James' Episcopal Church, frequently serving as a vestryman, and after the church burned in 1910 became deeply involved in the building of the new structure. His architectural interests spread further and, at his suggestion, the drab, grey courthouse was painted a more cheerful yellow and white. In 1914 Mr. Groome was instrumental in producing a detailed map of Fauquier County and his concern for the early history of the county began to develop.

to exhaust the literature on the subject, it presents a well-balanced selection from Benjamin's "Taming of Beucephalus" to Gordon's "The Sick Stock-Rider" with many familiar and more obscure examples in between.

Harry Groome was a poet as well as an historian and civic-minded gentleman. While in Wythe County in the 1880's he had composed several poems and in 1905 he and his third wife, Mary, published an anthology of verse, *Saddle and Song* (Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott). While not claiming

In 1907 he wrote *The Groome Family and Connections: A Pedigree with Biographical Statistics* (privately printed in Philadelphia). From this one learns that Samuel Groome, a Quaker sea captain, settled near Chestertown, Maryland in 1724 and the family remained in Maryland for several generations. It was Harry Groome's father who was taken to Philadelphia by his mother and subsequently established the family's association with that city.

In the 1920's Mr. Groome's historical efforts culminated in two serious historical publications. He was the editor of the *Fauquier Historical Bulletin*, published quarterly between 1921 and 1924

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Membership

The Historical Society now is accepting annual membership renewal dues. If you would like to continue on our mailing list and receive News and Notes and Society notices please mail your check with adjacent form.

Harry Connelly Groome

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by the Fauquier Historical Society, and in 1927 he published *Fauquier During the Proprietorship: A Chronicle of the Colonization and Organization of a Northern Neck County* (Richmond: Old Dominion Press). The *Bulletins* contained articles by Mr. Groome and other notable historians, foremost among whom was Fairfax Harrison. Many of Mr. Groome's articles dealt with subjects which served as the raw material for his book.

Fauquier During the Proprietorship is an history of the colonial period of the county including the Indian occupation, the proprietorship of Lord Fairfax, and a more topographical discussion of the development of the parishes and towns within the emerging county. Although filled with detailed information on many topics, it is lucidly written and the chapter on "Lord Fairfax's Estate" conveys the excitement of a good biography.

Mr. Groome died on May 20, 1941 and, although he published nothing during the last fifteen years of his life, he will continue to occupy a prominent position among historians for the pioneering work he did on the early history of Fauquier County. There are, undoubtedly, many reasons Mr. Groome stopped probing historical documents, but foremost among them was the loss

of his wife, Mary, in 1925. She had assisted him with much of his research and writing and without her he "didn't have the heart to go on" (to use his daughter's words).

Harry Connelly Groome had a strong sense of history which combined with his deep love of Virginia to make him one of Fauquier County's most respected historians.

— Aileen H. Laing

Marker for Delaplane

An historic marker was dedicated on Thursday afternoon, August 27, at Delaplane.

The marker was erected through the efforts of the Piedmont Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, following permission granted by the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission.

The marker commemorates the first movement of troops into battle by rail in any war. General Joseph E. Johnson's troops were in Winchester as the First Battle of Manassas was forming. They were marched through the mountain passes to Piedmont Station, where the Manassas Gap Railroad ended at that time. General "Stonewall" Jackson's brigade was the first to arrive and began boarding the cars July 19, 1861.

Airlie Farm Ham

Directions for Curing

For 500 lbs. of pork mix:
48 lbs. (3 pecks) salt
1 gal. molasses
5 lbs. brown sugar
2½ lbs. saltpetre

In making the mixture, thoroughly mix the salt, brown sugar and saltpetre *first*, then add the molasses (having warmed it to make it as fluid as possible.)

Mix these ingredients well and rub the meat thoroughly on both sides leaving a portion of the mixture on the fleshy side. Pack in layers in tight boxes, fleshy side up. Let hams remain one week, after which take them out and replace with upper layer at the bottom, middle layer on top and bottom layer in the middle. Change them this way every week for six weeks so each layer is in the bottom of the box two weeks. The mixture should make a brine sufficiently deep at the bottom of the box to cover the lower layer of hams. After they have been cured, hang up and smoke on clear dry days until they are the color of mahogany. When the hams have been smoked enough, rub well with fine ground pepper, especially around the joints. Wrap in paper, sew up in bags and whitewash the bags before hanging up.

The Fauquier Historical Society

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