

# Times in Toano



Volume 3 Issue 2

## Summer 2022

Newsletter  
of the  
Toano  
Historical  
Society

### A Letter from Jack Wray THS President



Some of you may have seen that Wray Bros. Inc. has begun cleaning up the Farinholt/Higgs property, assessing what needs to be done to the house to make it a viable asset in the community. It has an appealing location on the corner of Rt. 60 and Chickahominy Road directly across from the Joe Carlton House (1897). The front porch and two story bay windows are ornate with Victorian features impressing travelers back when the village was experiencing a boom, and even now as Toano is going through some positive changes. The arched dentil

moulds, wide frieze boards under the soffit, turned porch columns, pickets and shaped porch brackets are reminders of the craftsmanship of this era. We removed some of the aluminum siding (1968) in a few places to find the heart pine siding underneath is in pretty good shape. The interior millwork, wood floors, and staircase are of exceptional quality.



*The Farinholt house as it looks today*

Another interesting feature is the Historical Marker on the corner of the property telling of Lafayette's encampment 2 miles away at Chickahominy Church. Today, Chickahominy Baptist Church members faithfully clean up around the sign showing pride in their ancestors church mentioned on the marker.



*Side view with the historical marker*

William G. Farinholt built this Victorian in 1901. He and Branch Martin of Waverly Farm

(the restored club house in the Whitehall Subdivision) were business partners. Together they built the Martin & Farinholt General Merchan-  
*(continued on page 2)*



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## President's Letter

*(continued from page 1)*

dise Store in 1906 next to the old Bank Building (1903). I can envision Mr. Farinholt taking a short walk to work and Mr. Martin probably hitching up his horse and buggy for his mile and a quarter ride into town. At that time, the train tracks still crossed Rt. 60 and the center line ran through the area where the Toano Open Air Market is held each Saturday morning.

The W.C. Martin House borders the Farinholt property. We recently made a connecting path where they adjoin, allowing access to the house without having

to get out on Route 60. I've been enjoying giving tours of some of the historic houses and buildings in Toano and am looking forward to adding another Founders home to the circuit.

We should be thankful for the homes and buildings that have survived on Main Street considering what we've lost in the past. We should never forget the shameful loss of the Gatewood House last September 2021. This left a tremendous hole on our Main Street corridor that cannot be replaced. Restoring historic buildings connects us to the past. They are physical reminders of what came before us and help to create a sense of place to be passed on to future generations. It is the Mission of Toano Historical Society to **Inspire** a new sense of community spirit, **Promote** interest in our history, and **Preserve** our small town character.

Best Regards,

*Jack*



*The interior staircase is an example of the exceptional quality of the architectural features in this historic home.*

## THS Spring Members Event Featured A New Business in an Historic Home

On April 28, 2022, over 70 THS members and invited guests were able to hear about the status of the work to restore the historic Travers House and an update on hohl, the new restaurant in that space.

The featured speakers were THS president Jack Wray and Australian businessman Chris Starke, the creator and operator of hohl. Chris's vision is for hohl to be a community gathering space where all can feel welcome and enjoy freshly prepared to order breakfasts and lunches.



*Chris Starke*

Stanley Travers was in attendance, and spoke of his memories of Toano and the Travers home. ([watch his talk on the THS Website](#))



*Stanley Travers*

The restaurant is located in Toano at 7961 Richmond Road and displays the beautiful restoration of the building by Wray Bros. Inc. They used repurposed building materials from several historic homes and buildings in Toano and Charlottesville, including the ceiling fan from Barksdale's Drug Store, torn down in 1966 when Richmond Road was widened.

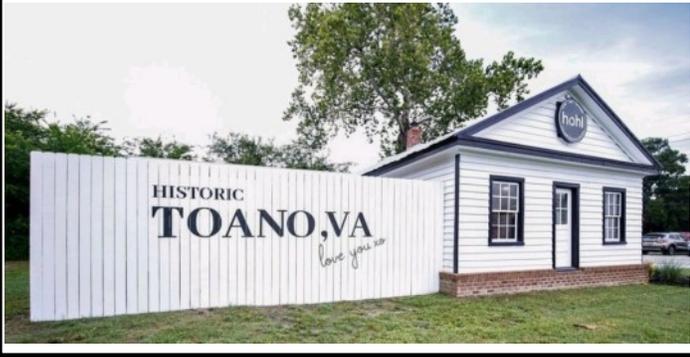


*THS members enjoying refreshments and conversation at the Spring event*



### **hohl Now Open!**

Come and experience the beautiful craft-work of the building while enjoying a cup of coffee or tea. Delicious baked goods are also available. In the coming weeks they will launch the full menu with freshly made to order wholesome meals, sandwiches and salads. It is a wonderful addition to Toano!



### **Become a Member of THS Online signup available!**

Please consider becoming a member of THS to help us preserve and promote the history of Toano.

Annual Membership Cost:  
\$25 Individual, \$35 Family, \$55 Business

Go to the [Membership Page](#) of the THS website to sign up and pay online, or sign up at the THS table at the Toano Open Air Market.

### **THS Membership Renewal Period Begins October 1, 2022**

Current THS members are asked to renew their memberships for 2023 beginning on October 1, 2022. We appreciate your continuing support of our mission and vision!

A reminder email will be sent to all members prior to that date. Renewals can be done online or in person at the Open Air Market. Don't miss out on our member events in the coming year!

All new members joining after October 1 will have a membership period through 2023.

### **Toano Summer Solstice Celebration: An Evening of Fun and Music**

Over 200 people gathered on June 18 on the Toano Village Green to celebrate the beginning of summer with music, food, beverages, and friends.



The event raised \$3,557.33 for THS. The support of our members and community will enhance the mission of the Toano Historical Society. Thank you to all the volunteers and vendors who made this community event happen!



### **Follow us on Facebook**

Follow the Toano Historical Society on Facebook to get information and updates about upcoming events. You can also find interesting historical photos and stories.

## Toano History Spotlight:

### The Farinholt

By Fred Boelt, THS Historian

The December 21, 1901 edition of the Virginia Gazette had a brief item in the Toano society column, "Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Farinholt are moving into their new home this week." Who were the Farinholt? This was not a local family name, but as will be seen, did have local family connections.

William Granville Farinholt was born in King and Queen County around 1854. His parents were David A. and Mary Farinholt, very successful farmers. By the 1870 census, William was attending school, and by 1880, he was farming on his own in King and Queen County. However, all of this changed in 1884, when he married Frances Elizabeth Marston, widow of Christopher Newbill of Essex County. Known as Bettie to family and friends, she was the daughter of Dandridge Watkins Marston and his first wife, Ann Eliza Morris. Bettie was born at Roslyn in James City before the family moved to Variety Grove on Old Forge Road. She had a son and a daughter by Christopher Newbill when she married Farinholt.



*Pictured above: Frances Elizabeth Marston Newbill Farinholt  
Photo courtesy of Miriam Middleton*

In 1900, William and Bettie Farinholt and her daughter, Bessie F. Newbill, were residing in Essex County, where William was farming and Bessie was teaching school. The September 21, 1901 edition of the local Toano newspaper, Peninsula News, carried a memorial to Bessie Newbill who had died on August 19th of typhoid fever in Essex County. Undoubtedly, the Marston family had influenced William and Bettie to move to Toano, but perhaps Bessie's death urged them on.

The Farinholt home was built on a three-quarter acre lot on the corner of the Main

Stage Road and the road to Chickahominy Church. They also purchased an additional four acres from C. B. Richardson that joined the back of their lot. The very pleasant two-story frame home with Victorian trim consisted of eight rooms. The original hand-dug, brick lined well is still on the property. Water was drawn from the well by a metal frame windmill; quite an expensive item at that time.

William Farinholt was the purchaser or partner of numerous parcels of farm land or lots in the village over a number of years. One of the better-known partnerships was with Branch Martin.



*Brick-lined well discovered during property cleanup*

George F. Sweeney built the building, and the grand opening of Martin and Farinholt Store was held on September 21, 1906. The business thrived and a warehouse was built on the back of the property in 1909. In the 1910 census, Farinholt's occupation was listed as "retail merchant."

Enoch Martin's cousin, Walter Coleman Martin came to Toano in 1911, roomed with the Farinholt and worked at the store. Martin eventually purchased the store and business.

Based on notes in the local newspapers, Bettie Farinholt's health had been deteriorating for several years. She died on November 2, 1913, and was interred in the James City Chapel Cemetery. By 1916, William Farinholt had married Mary Annette Warren, daughter of John and Amanda Bush Warren, and they lived in the Farinholt home.

In the 1920 through 1940 censuses, William Farinholt's occupation was listed as "farmer" and "truck farmer." *(continued on p 5)*

## The Farinholts

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Mary Farinholt died on February 8, 1944, and was buried in the James City Chapel Cemetery. In her will, she left all of her interest in their property to her husband. He, in turn, sold their home and land to J. E. Higgs in August 1944, and the Higgs family retained ownership of the home until recent years.

After Mary's death, William moved back to King and Queen County and lived with his sister, Mollie Farinholt. He died in a nursing home in Richmond on March 19, 1948. His obituary stated that he was buried in the James City Chapel Cemetery. There are no tombstones there for William or Mary, but there is room next to Bettie Farinholt's grave for both graves.



Check out the Toano Open Air Market on Saturdays (9am-1pm) on the Toano Village Green. Over 20 vendors are on site offering a wide variety of items for sale. Most weeks feature live music and a food truck.

THS will also be there with merchandise and information about how we are working to further our mission. Come out and support family farms and local agriculture and businesses!



## Meet the THS Board Members

**Patte Martin, Newsletter Editor**



Patte was born in Richmond VA and spent her growing up years living in various places in Virginia, including 6 years in Williamsburg where she began her love of local history. She attended Washington Lee High School in Arlington VA and graduated from the

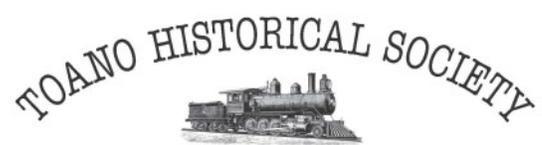
College of William & Mary in 1978 with a degree in political science. It was at W&M where she met her husband, Tim.

Tim and Patte spent their first years of marriage in Northern Virginia where Patte worked for E-Systems as a cost analyst. That job led to a love of computers which continues to this day. In 1989, a 3M job transfer for Tim moved the family to Woodbury, Minnesota. After the move, Patte continued to do computer work, first as a volunteer at her church and then on the church staff doing the website, database management, and general hardware and software support.

Tim and Patte have two daughters, Wesley and Allie. Wesley is married to Brandt, and they have three sons. She owns Primp, a women's clothing boutique, and currently has six stores in the Midwest. Allie is married to Blake and works as a CPA for a senior living and community outreach organization. Patte is happy that both daughters live close by in Minnesota.

Patte retired in 2017, and she and Tim now spend about half the year in Lanexa VA at their cabin. The cabin is on property that has been in the Martin family for several generations. Patte was happy to get involved in the Toano Historical Society. Her family and Tim's family have deep roots in Virginia, and she loves to research family history. Tim has strong family connections to Toano, and it makes the town very special to both of them. She loved to hear her father-in-law's stories about growing up there. She is a strong believer in the mission of THS.

In addition to doing the newsletter for THS, Patte likes to spend time reading, traveling, and playing with her grandsons.



**Toano Historical Society Board of Directors**

President, Jack Wray

Secretary, Richard Krapf

Treasurer, Susan Kohlman

Historian, Fred Boelt

Newsletter and Website, Tim and Patte Martin

Volunteer and Programs & Events Coordinator, Deidre McAuley-Hayes

Social Media Chair, Emmalyn Carter

Board Member-At-Large, Rena Wray

Membership, Tim Martin