

MAY MUSEUM & PARK HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

MAY MUSEUM, 3802 SOUTH MAIN ST., FARMVILLE, NC 27828

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SUMMER 2024



The May Museum and Park is dedicated to preserving and interpreting Farmville area history. Ms. Tabitha M. DeVisconti, bequeathed her 19th century home with its contents, the first house in Farmville, NC, to the Town of Farmville in 1983. The Town opened the facility in 1991 as the May Museum and Park. The museum's mission is preserving, interpreting, and sharing the history of the Farmville region to foster better understanding and appreciation of the people that built and contributed to Pitt County's rural heritage.



The summertime canopy of trees embraces the museum garden.

So now summer is upon us. Someone once said, *“Everything good, everything magical, happens between the months of June and August.”* We hope you have a great summer and a safe one. We plan to have more events this year in conjunction with the Farmville Chamber of Commerce and other groups. We will announce them as soon as we know the dates and times. We hope that all who read these newsletters enjoy the fascinating local history of the May Museum and the town of Farmville. Each issue of the newsletter will continue to have recent Museum events, history, old and new photos, biographies, and memorabilia all dealing with the appreciation of the May Museum and the Town of Farmville. You are always invited to become a member of The Friends of the May Museum which sponsors enjoyable social events in the Museum gardens throughout the year. Many thanks to those of you who have sponsored our museum events! The following is a list of the upcoming events to put on your calendar.....

2024 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- ❖ **June 19th, Wed., ...Pitt County Family Researchers...6:30--8:30 May Museum**
- ❖ **June 20th, Thurs....2nd Annual Pig Pickin' Featuring Gorham's Restaurant, East Carolina Italian Ice, and Music by Trainwreck....5:30-8:30 May Museum Garden**
- ❖ **June 27th, Thurs....Joanne Honeycutt speaking on 2nd Novel...2--3:30 May Museum**
- ❖ **July 27th, Sat....1st Annual BBQ Festival..2-8pm..Duck Rabbit Brewery Grounds**





Crazy Quilts to New York Beauties



The May Museum & Park now has on display its Quilt Collection made up of over 50 quilts of exquisite local craftsmanship dating back to the 1840's.

**May Museum & Park
3802 S Main St. Farmville, NC 27828**

**For hours and to schedule tours
Contact: Roger Kammerer, Director**

The May Museum & Park is very pleased to announce that Savannah Little, of Farmville, NC, is interning at the Museum for the summer. In her own words....."Hi! I'm Savannah, your friendly museum intern. I'm a current senior at Western Carolina University and



lifelong Farmville resident. I'm the daughter of Tammy Little and granddaughter of Mike and Diane (Hawkins) Hobgood, as are my three little sisters. I have a love for literature, which is why I study it, but I see a career for myself in publishing or museum studies. Religion is also a special interest of mine. I look for the divine in the little things and I hope that comes through in my writing. When I am not preoccupied trying to capture what I see in words and pictures, I try to move as much as possible. I love to

hike and can probably play any sport mediocly. Though the mountain region has much more to offer in the world of trails, the streets of Farmville have a special place in my heart. I'm excited to keep walking them this summer while I learn more about the town's make up. See you around."

Annual Hat and Garden Party



On Sunday, May 5, 2024, the Friends of the May Museum held their annual Garden and Hat Party. Due to inclement weather, the event was moved to the great room at the Farmville Library. A nice convivial crowd turned out to enjoy the jazz stylings of locally renowned Steve Creech and his multitalented friend, Jim Gilliam, of Grifton, NC. There was wine, lemonade, fruit, cheese, chicken salad, chocolate, and tables of other delicious summertime delicacies to enjoy. There were also numerous children in hats at the event and a new category was created to include them in the hat judging.



The judges for this year's Garden and Hat Party were our ever gracious friend, Bernice Newton, and Karen Smith, who has won the award for the best hat for many years for her dazzling creations.



Winners of the Hat Contest were: [L-R] Melody Bulow, Cynthia Lauderdale, and Lisa Smith.



Great photo showing Adele Goodine, Karen Smith, and Gretchen Allen

EVENT--1st Annual Autism Charity Golf Tournament



On Fri., Apr. 19, 2024, through the efforts of *An Autistic Dream, Inc.*, the 1st Annual Autistic Autism Charity Golf Tournament was held at the Farmville Golf and Country Club. A large crowd of golfers turned out to support autism families and help establish a sensory center in Farmville, NC. Sponsored by Farrior and Sons, Inc., Phelps Chevrolet of Greenville, NC, and the Farmville Country Club, they raised \$7,000 for the sensory center.

On Sat., Apr. 20, the fourth annual Autistic Extravaganza, an autism acceptance event, took place at Babe Ruth Baseball Field,. The event featured an acceptance walk, food, face painting, inflatable games, raffles, vendors, a DJ and dancing.

On May 31, An Autistic Dream, Inc. had their ribbon cutting and grand opening of the Sensory & Activity Center at 3726 N. Main St., Farmville, NC.

Monument---- Aaron & Cornelius Tyson Marker



Many of you may have wondered about the monument at the railroad tracks on the Moye-Turnage Road. On Nov. 2, 1927, the Tyson Reunion organization and the Major Benjamin May Chapter DAR of Farmville, NC, unveiled a monument on Hwy. No. 91, honoring their ancestors, Aaron Tyson, Indian Fighter in the Tuscarora War in Hyde Co., NC and Cornelius Tyson, Pitt Co. Revolutionary War soldier. Over 2000 people attended the ceremonies at the high school and the unveiling of the marker later in the day. The principal speaker for the occasion was Senator Lawrence Davis Tyson, of Knoxville, TN. The piece of land for the monument was given by Robert Lee Smith of Greenville, NC and was in close proximity to the old Tyson homestead.



EVENT--- Chamber of Commerce Spring Soiree



This fantastic Farmville Chamber of Commerce Soiree was held on Apr. 20, 2024 in a large tent set up in the garden of the May Museum & Park. This event featured a food and wine pairing featuring local foods from Farmville Pizza, Washington Crab Company, Gorham's Café, and Tucci's Fired Up.



This event celebrated everything Farmville. It was the first of a series of Farm to Table events that the Chamber will be hosting locally farmed raised foods.



The event hosted a silent auction for many donated fine gifts. Hunter Walters hosted a live auction for a painting by his late father, Randy Walters, of the Farmville Furniture Company. Michael Cable also hosted an animated live auction for exotic prizes such a trip to Malta and to Brazil.



FARMVILLE BUSINESS--- Audrey's Herbal Spa



Whether you know it or not, you've probably seen Audrey Vines' car darting around town. She's a woman wearing many hats...and she wears them with style. Often an assured voice for her community and never less than a spirited participant, Audrey leaves an impression wherever she goes. Her entrepreneurial success, she says, is "*by the grace of God.*"

I had an opportunity to speak with her on a rainy Tuesday afternoon at her spa on South Main Street. The spa is just one of her many passions and the variety of products she sells inside attests to her versatility.

Audrey's Herbal Spa opened at its current location 7 years ago. Along with it she opened a food bank. A majority of clients come to her seeking treatment for their diabetic symptoms. When I arrived,

Audrey was preparing for a client scheduled for a foot treatment. She's a certified diabetes prevention specialist, a licensed nail tech, reflexologist, and more. I was impressed by how thoroughly she's covered her bases. Products like foot salts and creams, she makes herself. Some of the shop's most popular offerings include waist trainers, Jamaican castor oil, and the recently added compression socks.

Perhaps the development of her spa business started when Audrey began selling facial kits, but she was an entrepreneur long before that. She recalls selling handmade bracelets in her youth. She spent that youth in Farmville and graduated from Farmville Central before attending Pitt Community College and ECU in pursuit of her many degrees.

Audrey began a teaching career in 2007 after she was unable to land a job in her field of study — family and consumer sciences. She secured a job teaching Culinary Arts at South Central and D.H. Conley High Schools. She then transferred to Edgecombe County Public Schools after budget cuts eliminated her position. She said she enjoyed her time as a culinary teacher and tried to make her classes as engaging as possible. In 2022, Audrey published a cookbook, "*Kids at Heart Cookbook*," which contains 49 breakfast, lunch, dinner and dessert recipes that she created with her students.

Audrey has been recognized for her work in the community with a Governor Hunt Award. Besides teaching and managing to author multiple books, she is also an active member of the "*The Glorifying Vines Sisters*" gospel group at the same time.

The Glorifying Vines Sisters is made up of four real life sisters, Alice Vines, Dorothy Vines Daniels, Audrey Vines, and Mattie Vines Harper, who are musical matriarchs of eastern North Carolina. Along with Johnny Ray Daniels who also plays lead guitar and other family members and close associates who fill in on drums, bass, and keyboards complete the group. Since 1958, the group has been tearing up the road and have been performing at venues ranging from churches to bars for decades. Their music is steeped in the traditions of quartet gospel—a style that came into its own in the 1930s with groups like the *Soul Stirrers* and the *Dixie Hummingbirds*. They have shared the stage with many of the biggest names in the genre, including the *Mighty Clouds of Joy* and the *Swanee Quintet*. But while the Vines Sisters can wreck the house with the best of them, they also bring a distinctive sweetness and a mellow

funkiness to their music. They go where they are called and, just as Audrey credits a divine manager for her journey, the group believes they are called to those places for a reason. Their mother is quoted as saying that one reason they developed a talent for music was the need to use music to communicate. Her gospel group is still going strong, and so is Audrey's avid community involvement.

Audrey also offers Zumba dance classes at the Farmville Community Center. She and her students perform at the annual Dogwood Festival. She's an active church member and valued advisor for many town projects.

Currently, Audrey is working on a sequel to the book she co-authored with her mother in 2023, entitled *'Walking in the Shadow of the Past: In the Eyes of a Child,'* and developing a variety production with her brother. Be on the lookout for it at the Paramount Theater! As for the future of Audrey's Herbal Spa and all the other work she does, Audrey says she isn't going anywhere. She does it all with a missionary spirit...and the work of a missionary never ends.

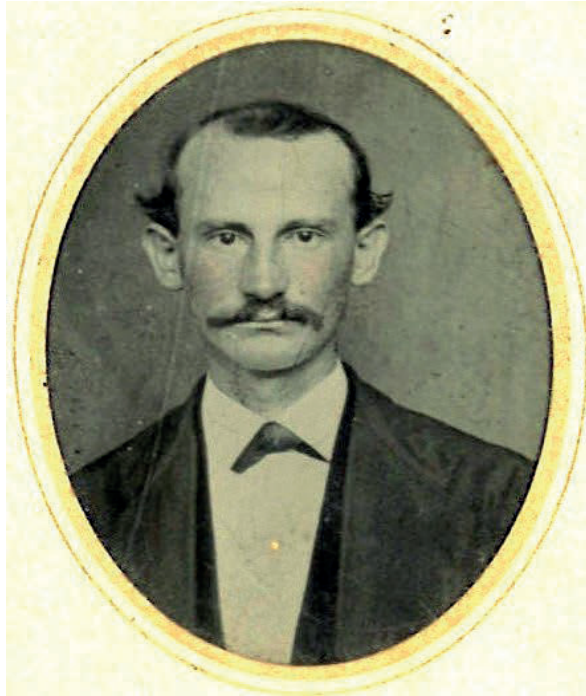
Audrey has achieved so much that she can't help but undersell herself over the course of our brief conversation, but I know she's received national recognition for her dedication to service and her cookbook intended for the inexperienced cook, which she made with the help of a group of children. Audrey never overlooks those in need of an advocate. She also keeps her eyes on the future. Whenever she decides to slow down, Vines wants to open a home for the unhoused. *"I'll go until I can't,"* she told me. I believe her!

by Savannah Little



Audrey's Herbal Spa, 3828 S. Main St., Farmville, NC

BIOGRAPHY--- James Oscar May



James Oscar May, b. July 23, 1849, in his parents' house (the Museum), d. Jan. 8, 1883 from bright's disease in his mother's house (the Museum), son of James Williams May and Tabitha Bynum.

Bright's disease is an old term used to describe inflammation of the tiny filters in your kidneys now called nephritis. It was associated with high blood pressure and diabetes. Bright's disease was historically treated with warm baths, blood-letting, digitalis, mercury compounds, opium, laxatives and no consumption of alcohol, cheese or red meat.

Familiarly known only as Oscar, very little is known about his life. He appears to have had a good local education. In the 1860 Census he is found living with his parents and was listed as a farmer.

On June 19, 1866, Oscar was appointed Marlboro postmaster, serving until Sept. 1867. In the 1870 Census, Oscar is again found living with his parents and was listed as a farmer.

We know that Oscar was engaged to Delia Joyner, a daughter of Rev. George Joyner and Louisa A. Blount. Delia died three weeks before their marriage and she was buried in her wedding dress.

Sometime about 1875/76, Oscar apparently moved to Hillsborough Co., FL where he bought a large tract of land in what would become part of Tampa, FL. Oscar divided the land up into lots for sale and eventually returned to Farmville. The Tampa lots were subsequently sold for taxes over the years.

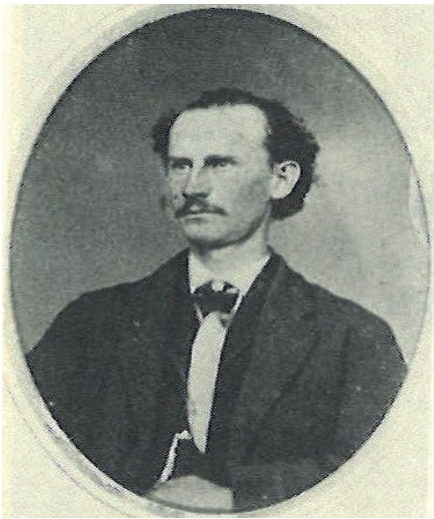
After Oscar died, his property was left to his mother, Mrs. Tabitha Bynum May, one brother, J. E. B. May, and two sisters, Mrs. Addie G. DeVisconti and Mrs. Sue May Albritton.

Mrs. Tabitha Bynum May was guardian to her granddaughter, Ione B. May, daughter of J. E. B. May. It seems Mrs. Tabitha Bynum May had considerable correspondence with Messers. Wall & Knight, Tampa attorneys, with the view of recovering the Tampa property sold for taxes.

After the death of Mrs. Tabitha Bynum May in 1891, Robert Lang Davis was named guardian of Ione B. May. Soon after, Davis went to Tampa, FL in the interest of Mrs. Sue May Albritton and his ward, Ione B. May. Davis contacted Sparkman & Sparkman, attorneys in Tampa, FL,

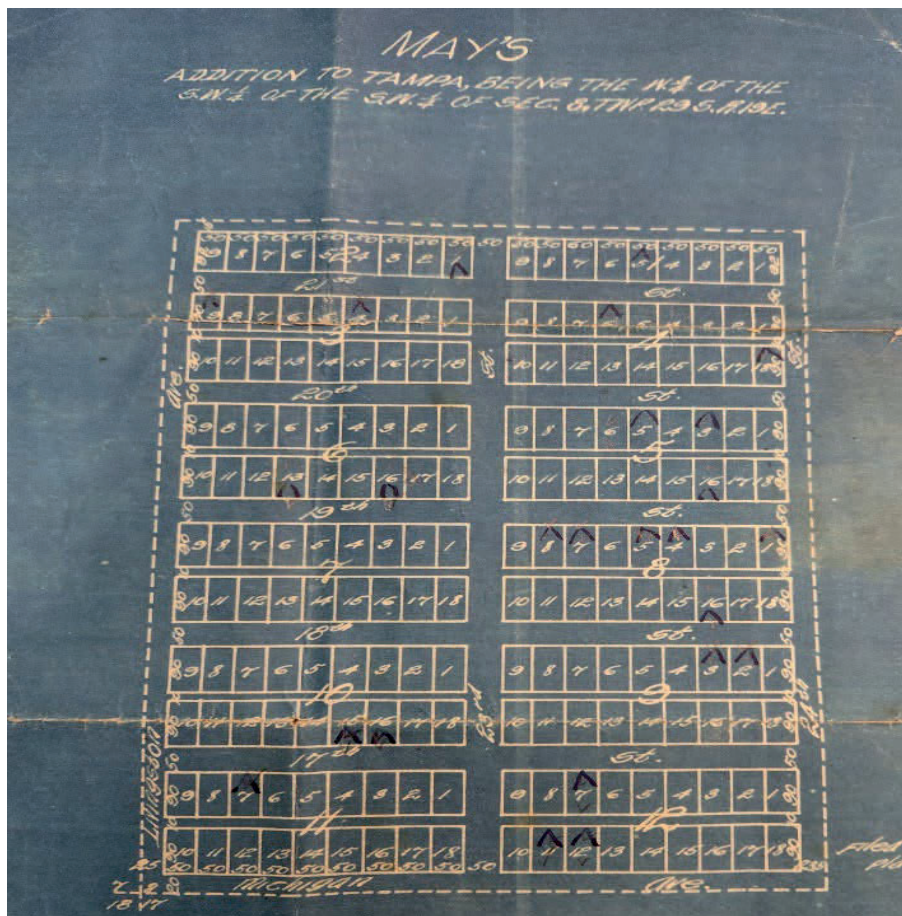


Delia Joyner



who thought that Davis had a good chance of recovering the property. Davis then went with Mr. Knight to the law office of Peter O. Knight & Parslow, where he was shown a document from Mrs. Tabitha Bynum May consenting for herself as an heir of J. Oscar May, and as guardian to Ione B. May, to a division of the Tampa property. It said the heirs of J. Oscar May to have one-third of the same, Alfred H. Parslow, one-third, and W. C. Brown, one-third. Mr. Parslow exhibited a map of the property indicating the lots drawn by each property. Mr. Knight drew up all the decrees, deeds, etc. to complete the final settlement of the agreement made by Mrs. Tabitha Bynum May. Robert Lang Davis signed the document as guardian of Ione B. May, and as representative of Mrs. Sue May Albritton and Mrs. Addie G. DeVisconti.

Apparently, the heirs were able to reclaim Oscar's property from the court. It is known that A. G. Davis and Sue May Albritton paid taxes on 22 lots from 1897-1899. From a 1909 letter it is known the family paid taxes on 17 lots in Tampa, FL and Paul Dupree was thinking of moving there. In 1911, F. M. Dupree sold some lots as guardian of Tabitha DeVisconti and Sue May DeVisconti. When the last Tampa lots were sold is unclear.



Map of the May's Addition to Tampa, FL

DEDICATION--- Lady Turnage Lofts



On Sat., May 4, 2024, Uptown Properties, of Greenville, NC, celebrated five years of renovation in downtown Farmville with a special event to benefit Preservation NC. A large crowd of Farmville folks turned out for the dedication of the “*Lady Turnage Lofts*,” on Main Street. Under the guidance of Claire Edwards and her father, Don Edwards, this important project was about the restoration and re-adaptive use of the Turnage Building (formerly the Farmville Hardware building). The building was originally built as the Turnage Department Store (1900) and Lady Turnage Opera House upstairs (1902), and renovations began in 2019 by Uptown Properties. The event also included a self-guided tour of four stately historic Farmville homes. Local beer was provided by Duck Rabbit Brewery.



Impressive hors d'oeuvres were the perfect way to kick off a great event!

PLACE: Farmville Golf and Country Club



Donald Ross

The Farmville Country Club was dedicated on July 15, 1936, granting members access to the golf course designed by renowned designer, Donald Ross (1872-1948).

Ross was originally from Scotland and grew up playing on the storied Royal Dornoch course. He eventually became its groundskeeper before relocating to the US to run a course in Boston. Following his time there, Ross took an assignment on a property in Pinehurst, NC. He would go on to design four courses on the property. Ross established himself as a skilled course architect and is credited with over 400 designs in the US and Canada, though he saw relatively few of them in person. In 1947, Ross became the first president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Robert White, also a prolific course architect from Scotland, founded the society alongside him. Ross also golfed professionally. 1903 was his most successful year, as he won the North and South Open and placed 5th in the US Open, but he would go on to win four other regional competitions. He was admitted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 1977 for his

achievements. Donald Ross died in 1948 while completing a design for the Raleigh Country Club. He was living in Pinehurst, NC near his most famous 'Pinehurst #2' course at the time.

The Farmville course is 18 holes and 6206 yards on 125 acres. It was built in 1935 when Ross' primary focus was perfecting the greens keeping practices of southern courses. It adheres to Ross' philosophy of naturalness, characterized by a lack of major alteration of the landscape and full utilization of the grounds. The lay of the land determines the challenges each hole presents. The course is recognized for its accessibility, despite its well-known designer. Older courses are generally more accessible because their ranges are not as elongated as those built for modern equipment and techniques. The club is open year-round and hosts tournaments throughout the year. Its location between the coast and the center of the State makes it convenient for golfers in both regions. The club also boasts a pool which is open in the summer months. The Farmville Country Club is located at 3457 Bynum Drive or call 252-753-3660 for more information.



By Savannah Little



Eastern NC's 1st Annual BBQ Festival

Local BBQ ~ BBQ Cook Off at 4pm ~ Music

SATURDAY, JULY 27, 2024

TIME: 2PM-8PM

LOCATION: DUCK RABBIT CRAFT BREWERY GROUNDS

- CRAFT BEER SELECTIONS BY DUCK RABBIT CRAFT BREWERY
- A VARIETY OF EASTERN CAROLINA'S MOST LOVED LOCAL BBQ RECIPES, FEATURING GORHAM'S CAROLINA BBQ
- A SELECTION OF LOCALLY PREPARED FOODS FROM SOME OF THE EASTERN NC'S MOST LOVED "FOODIE FOOD TRUCKS", WINE VENDORS, & AN ASSORTMENT OF OTHER LOCAL VENDORS
- NON-ALCOHOLIC REFRESHMENTS

VENDOR APPLICATION FEE: \$150. MUST PROVIDE A MOBILE FOOD FACILITY PERMIT AS REQUIRED BY NC STATE REGULATIONS.

PROCEEDS FROM THE EVENT BENEFIT THE FARMVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
FARMVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, 3747 MAIN ST., FARMVILLE, NC
252.759.4671



FARMVILLE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

