

Victoria's Messenger

Summer 2025

The Newsletter of the Victorian Society at Falls Church, VA

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In the Good Old Summertime Starting With...

Picnic at Cherry Hill Park

Saturday, June 14, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Let's picnic like it's 1905! Back in the day, picnics were all the rage for meeting your girlfriend or boyfriend in a safe way that was acceptable in polite society. We don't have to follow such strict social rules in 2025, so let's have some plain old fashion fun. Come to Cherry Hill Farm Park on Saturday, June 14th from 11:00-3:00 and be ready to PARTEE. Men, there will be games of skill and games of strength so you can show off to impress the ladies. Ladies, there will be genteel games of badminton, croquet, and board games plus an opportunity to bring a yummy baked treat to be raffled off. If you're lucky, that special man may buy that treat to win your heart. Ladies, please wear your summer whites, or your prettiest summer outfit and don't forget to wear a lovely hat and bring a parasol. Men, how about wearing your summer trousers, suspenders, a dashing shirt and a boater, or other manly summer hat. We'll occupy the grounds behind the house and a lovely, covered pavilion with tables and benches. Please bring your own lunch and a chair if you want to sit out on the grass.

Please contact Sue Perlin (scdcleo@aol.com) so we know you are coming. Address: Cherry Hill Farmhouse 312 Park Ave. Falls Church, VA 22046.



Scenes from our Victorian Heritage Day event held at Cherry Hill Farm House.
For more photos and the President's letter go to page four.



Get-together in Memory of Chris Riherd

On **Saturday, June 7th**, from 5:00 P.M. till ? there will be a casual gathering at **Ireland's Four Provinces** in Falls Church for Society members and others to raise a glass in honor of former VSFC Vice President Chris Riherd. Please contact Gus Knapp eaugustusknapp@aol.com so we can let them know how many folks to have seats for. Thanks!



BRAIN STORMING SESSION – PUT THOSE THINKING CAPS ON!

June 21, 1:30 p.m.
Mary Riley Styles Library



We have reserved a room at the Mary Riley Styles Public Library in Falls Church to solicit ideas members may have regarding potential events and activities for the club. If you have any thoughts about activities and ideas for acquiring new members, we would love to hear your suggestions. Please respond to Sue Perlin at sdcleleo@aol.com by June 14th. We hope to see you there!

Victorian Bike Race July 12, 2025

Come and join us "cheer on" the high wheel (Penny Farthing) bike race in Downtown Frederick.

This is the only race of its kind and features riders from all over the world that will be speeding through the historic streets. Riders will be riding antique or replica 19th century bikes as they compete for the National Title.

THIS IS A FREE EVENT held in Downtown Frederick, MD from 12 to 3 p.m. Carpooling may be possible.

Suffragette Clothing, Period Riding Attire, Summer Whites encouraged but NOT required. If there are any volunteers that are interested in riding a 19th Ladies Coaster Bike (preferably in Suffragette attire) for a few short blocks, that may be possible.

Point of Contact: Pamela Jones. Please text to 703-509-7376



Bicycling
Fun
At
Victorian
Heritage
Day



Zoom Presentation
Invention & Innovation in the Victorian World
Sunday, July 20, 3 p.m.

What do in-line roller skates, hot water radiators, recorded music, early computers, and the Eiffel tower have in common? They were all Victorian innovations! Join us to learn more about the ways that Victorian inventions and technologies changed our world.

Sarah A Chrisman (author) and her husband Gabriel Chrisman (Librarian and 1890s Bicycle Craftsman) from Port Townsend, Washington, will provide us with a look at another aspect of the Victorian era – **Invention & Innovation**. As you may remember, last April Sarah and Gabriel gave a wonderful program on bicycling in the Victorian era. This program is sure to be just as fun and informative.

To learn more about the Chrisman's, you can follow them and watch many short videos on the Victorian Life and learn about her historical fiction and non-fiction Victorian era writings at This Victorian Life – Home.

To RSVP please contact Pamela Jones preferably via email at pjvictorian@yahoo.com or call 703-509-7376 NLT July 10th!!!! Thank you.

August 2, 2025 - Pleasure Gardens at Green Spring Gardens



Get away from the summer heat and join us at Green Spring Gardens where well-known and beloved historian, Debbie Waugh, has agreed to meet with us in the cool shade of the GSG Horticulture Center to regale us with tales of the social phenomenon of the 18th-Century Pleasure Gardens. These vast landscaped entertainment spaces, originating in London and later adopted in America, offered a host of attractions—refined and risqué—set amid ornamental gardens, arbors, and pavilions. After Debbie's presentation we will retire to the 1784 Historic House for a full British Tea.

Debbie's lecture and the tea are Saturday, August 2, from 1:30-3:30 and cost just \$45. Please contact Sue Perlin (scdcleo@aol.com) ASAP to make your reservation as seats are limited and we need at least 20 guests to be able to have this delightful program. Address: Spring Gardens Horticulture Center at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria, VA 22312.

SOCIAL SEASON SOIREE AUGUST 9, 11 A.M.

You are cordially invited to join us at Ireland's Four Provinces (in Falls Church) as we take part in the Victorian era's social season. True, we may not be at Saratoga or Newport, but that does not mean that we cannot partake of our own 'social season.'

To join us at this socialable event, please contact Terry Hooper at terryhooperknapp@aol.com no later than August 4.

Victorian Heritage Day Children's Activities & Falls Church Exhibit



From the President's Pen

Greetings again! Spring is rapidly surging towards summer. The weather is still nice (when it isn't raining!), and it is outdoor event time. Speaking of which, we just had a new event at Cherry Hill Farmhouse. On the 17th of May, we celebrated the second half of the nineteenth century (70's, 80's, and 90's) with our Victorian Heritage Day. The event had more than 130 people attending. We had displays (with interpretation by costumed members on ladies clothing, children's toys, dining implements, entertainment, and a general store exhibit. Also, there were antique bicycles and Spanish American War soldiers from Camp Alger! Plus, children's activities including a scavenger hunt. Everybody who attended seemed to enjoy our efforts. Photos from this event are shown on various pages of this Messenger.

I want to thank our dauntless members who participated; in no particular order, Ron Anzalone, Sue Perlin, Cindy Mester, Pam Jones, Priscilla Gibson, Leann Martin, Ralph Keane, Christy Beck, Linda Lau and most importantly, Terry Hooper, whose idea this event was. It was a lot of hard work, but we pulled it off. Well done every one! I also want to thank Holly Irwin for allowing us to use the farmhouse and grounds, and working with us to get everything set up and going. In addition, I want to thank Les Albers and John Holman, our gallant soldiers off to free Cuba and avenge the Maine, and Lee Cramp and Shane and Robin Boucher, the jaunty gents (and lady) of the Wheelmen for their contribution to the day's excitement. Their presence and displays were greatly appreciated. We also were able to sign up three new members. Erin Caplin, Yuhuan Chen and Lia Froehlich were daring enough to sign up to be a part of the club. They are very welcome, and I hope we will see more of them in future. Everyone, enjoy the nice weather while you can, and I will see you soon at some of our events down the road!



Our Spanish-American War Veterans



Fresh fruit should be eaten with a silver bladed knife, especially pears, apples, etc.

Dining in Style



Keeping Up Appearances



E. Augustus Knapp
President



Welcome to Cherry Hill Farm House, the home of the Joseph S. Riley Family



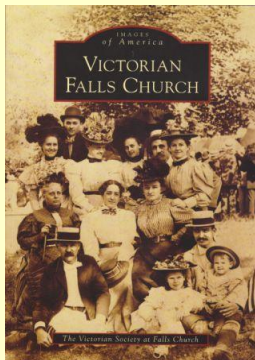
Victorian Entertainments Sounded Great



Victorian Toys Delighted
Visitors, Young and Old



From the Book Store

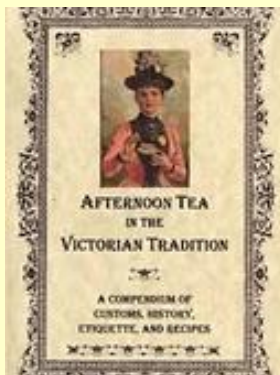


**VICTORIAN
FALLS CHURCH**
\$22.50

**VICTORIAN
STYLE
ENTERTAINING**
\$10

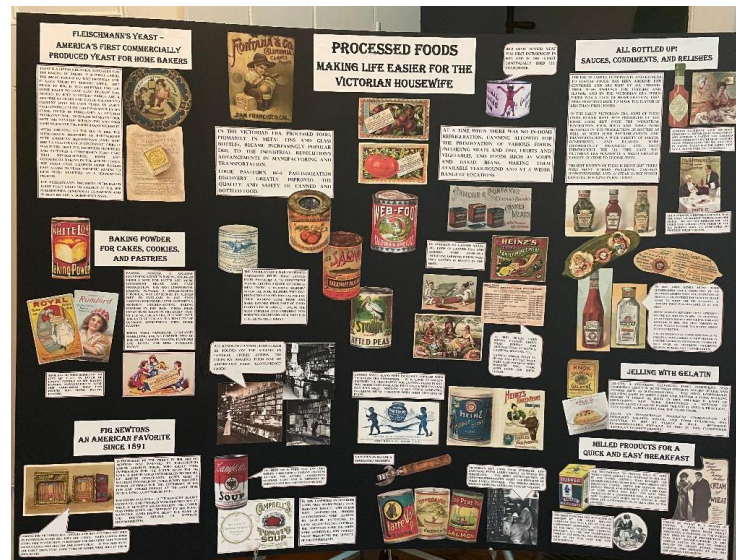


**AFTERNOON
TEA IN THE
VICTORIAN
TRADITION**
\$12



The purchase of books helps to support the VSFC and our Victorian heritage. To purchase contact Terry Hooper at terryhooperknapp@aol.com

Our 'general store' and processed foods exhibits. To learn more about these topics, check out the articles in this Messenger.



The Victorian Society at Falls Church

A chapter of the Victorian Society of America

P.O. Box 7436, Falls Church, VA 22040

Vicsocfc@hotmail.com

Officers

Gus Knapp, President

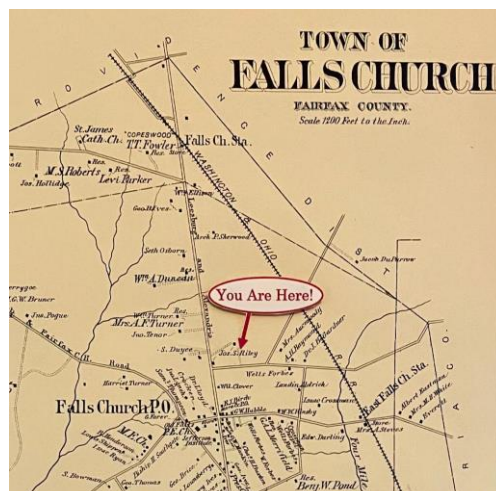
Christy Beck, Treasurer Leann Martin, Secretary

Board Members

Terry Hooper, Pam Jones

Membership – Gus Knapp

Newsletter Publisher – Linda Lau



TOWN OF FALLS CHURCH WORD FIND



Mary Riley - The daughter of Joseph Riley, owner of Cherry Hill Farmhouse; she was a champion of the public library and donated the land where the Mary Riley Styles Library now stands.

John J. Moran - In 1875, Doctor Moran served as the first mayor of newly charted town of Falls Church, but is best known for being the attending physician when Edgar Allan Poe died.

Hoosier Poet - James Whitcomb Riley - a prominent poet during the 1800s, he was a nephew of Judge Riley. His poem "Our to Old Aunt Mary's" is about visiting Cherry Hill Farmhouse. He was called the Hoosier poet because he was from Indiana (the Hoosier State) and famous for writing poems in the Hoosier dialect.

Freddie Foote - Son of a former slave, he went on to become a prominent member of the community, serving on the Town Council from 1881 - 1889 and running a grocery store.

W. A. Duncan - A notable citizen of Falls Church, he served as Mayor on the first integrated Town Council. In 1890 he petitioned the Commonwealth to restore the boundaries of the town when the Black community was gerrymandered out.

Brush's Saloon - A gathering place for the male citizens of Falls Church, the saloon was hated by the pro-Temperance ladies. They protested by holding vigil on the front steps until John D Brush was forced out of business.

Arbor Day - Following a storm that felled many local trees, the first Arbor Day in the Commonwealth of Virginia was held in Falls Church at the Jefferson Institute where Frady Park is now.

Camp Alger - Established May 1898 to help in the Spanish American War effort, about 35,000 troops were stationed there, the most notable was Carl Sandburg, the famous poet and author.

Browns Hardware - Opened in 1883 by James W. Brown selling groceries and hardware, it remained in business for 142 years, the longest running business in the City of Falls Church. One resident reported that Browns was the "most general of General Stores", where residents could purchase anything from pottery to varnishes.

Mattie Gundry - In 1899 she established the Virginian Home and Training School for mentally deficient children. The school was the only one of its kind in the south and was the second largest in the nation.

Dr. Thomas M Talbott - He was the first doctor in town, arriving in Falls Church in 1871 and practicing for several decades. In 1888, he caused a stir by installing the first telephone line in town to connect his house to one of the local stores.

W&OD - The Washington & Old Dominion railroad operated in Falls Church from 1859 to 1968. It was pivotal in the growth of Falls Church as it provided a critical transportation hub from the town to Alexandria, Washington, and Baltimore.

The Picnic Conundrum

"To my mind, picnicking is delightful, and to start in with the first warm days and live all the glad summer beneath the trees and in the sweet, pure air would be blissful indeed, but the picnic lunch basket is something of a detriment to the fullest enjoyment of the pleasure. Things get so terribly mixed and settle down in a way that does not always improve them."

The Buffalo News, July 7, 1892



You have decided to go to our June 14th picnic, **you have contacted Sue Perlin to let her know that you will be there**, picked out what to wear, and now you have got one more very important decision – what to pack in the picnic basket.

As you can see from the above quote, deciding what goes in the picnic basket might not be as simple as you would like. Of course, you will have no shortage of helpful hints about what is necessary for a great picnic experience. No matter where you lived in the Victorian era, the newspaper was a great source of not only the news of the day, but helpful hints for the homemaker or, in this case, the picnic basket filler:

"Of course you know all about it, but don't forget when the time comes to take your hard-boiled eggs to the picnic resting in a bed of crisp lettuce leaves. First you have taken out the yolks of the eggs, powdered them fine, and mixed them with a little mayonnaise dressing, just enough to moisten the mixture and then replace it and put the egg together. Or, if you do not care for your eggs in this form, make sandwiches of them, and chopping the egg or cutting it in small pieces with a silver knife, lay two or three sprays of watercress in each sandwich. They are refreshing."

The New York Times, June 11, 1899

And then there is this bit of advice from the July 16, 1897, *Missouri Telegraph*:

"Some girls have a real knack of packing a picnic lunch. Boxes are better than baskets in which to pack it, and except for sandwiches, white paper is better than linen napkins. Sardine sandwiches are pleasant these warm days, and when well prepared are delicious. Boston brown bread, sliced thin and buttered is very appetizing, and deviled eggs are favorites. Broiled or smothered chicken are preferable to fried chickens at a picnic. They are not so greasy, and as some girls say, 'It is no picnic at all with the chicken.'"

Or perhaps this might be something you would rather consider:

"Chicken Cheese. This is so nice that everyone who eats it once, likes it again. Boil two chickens till tender; take out all the bones and chop the meat fine; season to taste with salt, pepper, and butter; pour in enough liquor they are boiled in to make moist. Mold it in any shape you choose, and, when cold, turn out and cut into slices. It is an excellent traveling or picnic lunch."

The Jackson (Michigan) Citizen Patriot, October 8, 1875

But being the busy person you are, maybe you do not want to spend much time fussing over food. Well, starting in the 1870's you had another choice. Processed foods were becoming available to almost every part of the country. You could buy canned meats (no more cooking chickens or roasting beef), seafood, vegetables, fruits, even canned baked beans were available. Want to make escaloped chicken or chicken salad? No need to boil those two chickens...just open a can of Curtice Brothers Blue Label chicken:



The Industrial Revolution literally revolutionized the production of canned items available to the general public. New processes made it easier to produce the cans required and the 1870 introduction of chromolithography made producing paper labels in eye-catching colors and designs easy and cost effective. Louis Pasteur's 1864 invention of a pasteurization process made these items safer for human consumption and improved transportation methods meant these items could be shipped everywhere and at any time of the year. You no longer needed to live in Alaska to get Alaska salmon to enjoy; you could obtain it in a can on your general store shelf. As this 1880's Royal Brand trade card indicates a variety of canned seafoods were available and were "most convenient" for taking on a picnic.



Want some baked beans to go with that meat? By the late 1870's you won't have to bake those yourself. The process for canning Boston baked beans was patented in August 1877. As the trade card notes, canned baked beans were extremely popular with the public not just at home and for picnics but for everyday use especially for a working man's lunch.



Julius L. Morgan
"ROYAL BRAND" FISH DELICACIES.

Packed by { UNION FISH CO. of Maine, } ROSENSTEIN BROS.,
 { AMERICAN SARDINE CO. } Gen'l Agents, N.Y.
 { FRONTIER PACKING CO. }

BROILED FRESH MACKEREL in Tomato Sauce	ROYAL BRAND
BROILED FRESH MACKEREL in Mustard Sauce	ROYAL BRAND
BROILED FRESH MACKEREL in Spiced Sauce	ROYAL BRAND
CAPE ANN MACKEREL in Own Juice	ROYAL BRAND
MUSTARD SARDINES	ROYAL BRAND
SARDINES ROYAL AROMATIQUES (Spiced Sardines)	ROYAL BRAND
FRIED BROOK TROUT	ROYAL BRAND
FRIED BROOK EELS	ROYAL BRAND

All the above Fish Delicacies are READY FOR IMMEDIATE USE; they are rich, nourishing and of excellent taste and flavor;—they are the MOST CONVENIENT AND ECONOMICAL FOOD ARTICLES in the market. Nothing better can be had for FAMILY USE for PIC NICS, SOCIABLES, EXCURSIONS, HUNTING, YACHTING, or CAMPING PARTIES.

FOR SALE BY ALL GROCERS.

And, of course, no picnic was complete without some form of fruit, relishes, olives, and pickles:

"Fruit, pickles, olives, and cheese must not be forgotten."

The Marcellus (Michigan) News, August 12, 1892

"It is a good plan to carry plenty of fruit of such kind as is seasonable; it is far better than cake for the children."

Commercial, Bangor Maine, July 25, 1896

Not a fan of chicken or seafood? No problem, potted meats were also available from companies that we still have available to us today such as Libby, Armour, and Red Devil. Armour even advertised the "patent opener canned goods: each tin of our Canned Meats now has a Patent Key attachment for opening it, simple and effective in its working, as illustrated on the other side of this card." How convenient is that for taking on a picnic?

The great thing about canned and jarred fruits was that the fruits served did not have to be "seasonable" as the quote implies. It was now possible to obtain fruit such as peaches, apricots, pears, and various berries year-round.

And, of course, starting in 1869 the Heinz Company certainly helped to establish the bottled pickle and condiment market. Now one could easily pack pickles and relishes, olives, and various condiments

such as ketchup and salad dressings without having to worry about these items spilling all over the picnic basket. Definitely a time-saver for those preparing the basket like the folks pictured on this trade card that is advertising bottled fruits and canned vegetables.



Of course, it did not take long for the grocers of America to realize the market for canned and bottled picnic supplies:

PICNIC SEASON.

The season for picnics has arrived, and with it the worry about something suitable to eat upon these delightful occasions, for what is a picnic if one does not have something to eat.

A. P. NELSON & CO.

Have just the article that will suit.

Canned Goods

Come first in a picnic lunch basket. Try some of the following: Deviled Ham, Potted Ham, Corned Ham, Ham Roll, Veal Loaf, Boned Chicken, Chipped Beef, and all kinds of Sardines.

Pickles and Olives.

Every one knows that a picnic is not complete without pickles. We carry a full line of Heintz's Pickles in bottles and Bulk, also a line Monarch Olives.

Fruit

Is an indispensable article for a picnic. We keep a full line of fresh fruit on hand, and if to be had all, you will find it at our store.

Remember that all of the above goods are of the very best brands, for "Quality" is our watchword always.

Call and be convinced that we can supply your lunch basket to your satisfaction.

Yours Respectfully,

A. P. NELSON & CO., Grocers

Phone 22-2 623 Main Street

An Enjoyable Picnic

On a warm June day can be had if the lunch basket is stocked with our tempting delicacies. Eighteen varieties of Cakes, Imported Sardines, Salmon Cutlets, Heinz, Van Camp's and Wald's Fine Medal Beans in tomato sauce, Lunch Herring, Chicken Tamale and canned meats, a splendid line of Heinz pickles in bulk and glass, and a nice line of bottle goods are a few of our picnic specialties.

H. PHELPS, Grocer.

Tel. 174. 102-104 Main St.

For picnics—
Olives, all sizes, sweet and sour
Pickles,
Cheese, 14 varieties,
Sardines, in oil and mustard,
Anchovies, caviar,
Potted game,
Meats,
Lunch,
Tongue,
Ham.
In fact anything for the picnic-lunch basket.

Pickles at 5c a bottle, just the size to put in your picnic lunch baskets.

PHIL KARG,
21st King St., Mount Holly.

Now that you know what to pack in your picnic basket, there is still one picnic conundrum to solve:

—Prize conundrum—Why does a box of strawberries suggest a picnic lunch basket? Give it up? Because of the sand—which is there. Eh!

PICNIC POINTERS

Picnic Lunches.

Now is the time for picnics and out-of-door parties of all sorts, and the question, "What shall we carry?" is in order. The usual picnic lunch does not tempt the appetite, consisting as it does of thick sandwiches, made with corned beef or ham, and a quantity of cake and doughnuts. Every one eats all the time and they all return home tired out and cross, wondering why their outing did not do them any good.

No wonder. A picnic was never intended as an especial time to gorge one's self. There should be a regular meal-time, and no "picking" between. A goodly quantity of wholesome food should be provided, and the most important item is good sandwiches. There is an art in making sandwiches just as there is an art in doing anything well, and but few people have acquired that art.



Hampers, with several trays, are more desirable for packing. Ordinary lunch baskets are a difficulty. White confectioner's paper should be used for lining the basket and separating the different kinds of food; also, for covering neatly individual pieces. Cookies and crackers must be put in tight boxes. Plates are too heavy, but bright, new biscuit tins—the square shape are the best—are very useful in packing, and with fringed napkins laid inside, they serve well for salvers in handing the food around. Paper napkins are best.

Whatever is to be eaten last should be packed at the bottom of the hamper, and that to be served first at the top. Fruit, pickles, olives and cheese must not be forgotten.—*Ladies' Home Journal*

The picnic party that scatters the debris of its repast around in an untidy manner, throws orange peel or banana skins about, and litters the ground with peanut shells, invariably is accompanied with boisterous manners. It is usually composed of the class of persons with whom thoughtlessness is synonymous for selfishness and independence for impudence. Unfortunately this type of picnic party is not infrequent. They too often interfere with and mar the enjoyment of quiet, well-bred people who have sought the same locality they have, and on the same errand. It is not necessary to throw aside all the restraints of good breeding in order to enjoy a day under the trees. However, whatever defects of individual character the picnic makes manifest, they are more readily forgiven by the majority than transgressions committed when indulging in almost any other form of amusement. The basket picnic has no censors, and thousands of staunch supporters. When a giddy girl or a coarse youth, a brazen woman or a surly man, commits some impropriety which would be termed inexcusable on any other occasion, he is readily apologized for by observers on the ground that he is "at a picnic."—*Chicago News*.



Don't look in the glass when you get home from the picnic—that is, if you went there to enjoy yourself. Your collar will have disappeared and your starched dress will be mussed and spoiled. Remember only the pleasures of the day, the sighing of the trees, mingled with the voices and peals of laughter of loved ones, and you will want to go again.

Shopping in Victorian Falls Church

Our general store exhibit at Victorian Heritage Day highlighted shopping available to the residents of the town of Falls Church. In the late 1800's the citizens of the town of Falls Church had a number of shopping opportunities – general stores in the town itself as well as businesses and shops in Alexandria and Washington, DC. Getting to Alexandria was an easy trip down the Turnpike, what we now know as Route 7. Travel to Washington, DC, was not a problem either. Falls Church had two train stops, one in West Falls Church and one in East Falls Church that ran most of the day and night. Plus, in 1897 an electric trolley reached East Falls Church which also provided transit into Washington as well as Alexandria, Leesburg, and Fairfax.

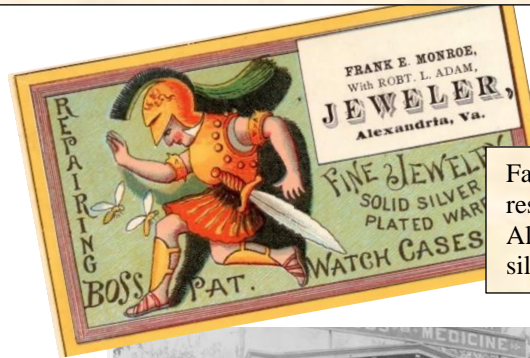
Here's a look at some of the stores in Falls Church and a few trade cards from stores in Alexandria and Washington, DC, where the residents might have shopped.



A satisfied general store customer!



Brown's Groceries and Hardware opened in 1883. An 1885 advertisement stated "Dealer in Groceries, Provisions, Queensware, Hardware, Paints, Oils, and Varnishes. Keeps constantly on hand a full stock of the above which he is selling low for cash."



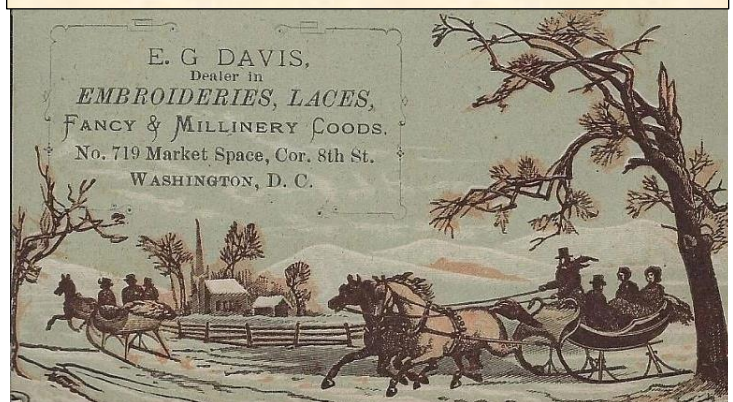
Falls Church did not have a jeweler so residents might have used this one in Alexandria for their jewelry, watch, and silverware needs.



Spofford & Church pharmacy opened sometime after 1886. Based on the signage and what is seen in the windows (a large selection of oil lamps can be seen in the right window), it sold much more than drugs. The store also had the first telephone exchange in the town.



No doubt the stylish ladies of Falls Church would want to have the best in millinery. Perhaps they sought it out at this shop.

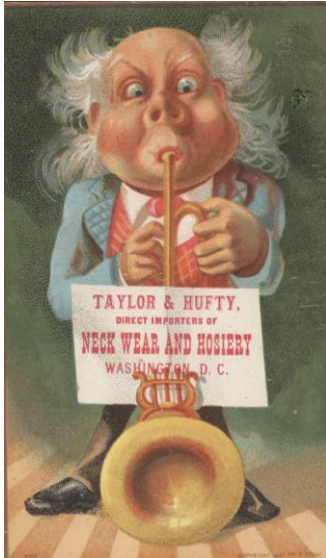


For residents wanting to avail themselves of 'dry goods' such as fabric, notions, and clothing, these two stores in Washington – Woodward & Lothrop and Lansburgh's – were the ones to go to. Lansburgh's had been in business since the 1860's and endeared themselves to Washingtonians when they provided free black crepe for Lincoln's funeral. Woodie's, as it was affectionately known, would open their DC location in the early 1870's. Both would become two of Washington's largest department stores.

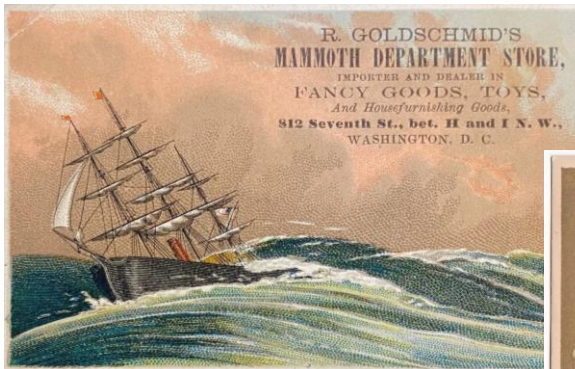


Mankin's Store originally sold toys, confections, and baked goods. He was the first in Falls Church to sell yeast which was made by his cook.

If you wanted shoes, clothing, hats, etc. for men, women, or children, then the stores in Washington or Alexandria would have filled your needs; it does not appear that stores in Falls Church sold these items. There is no indication that a tailor or dressmaker was there either but someone might have provided these services in their home.



Thompson's store was also the ticket office for the East Falls Church trolley line going into DC. Very convenient for Falls Church shoppers.



J.C. Elliott's store was located in East Falls Church. His daughter remembered "Father had a delivery team of beautiful matched gray dapple horses." Free delivery service!

While the Falls Church general stores sold smaller housewares, major housewares such as furniture, carpeting, and sewing machines would have been purchased elsewhere.

