



The Virginia Huguenot Society

An organization of descendants of French Protestants who,
due to religious persecution, fled France.

frenchhuguenots-virginiasociety.org

Spring/Summer 2021 Newsletter

A Message from Our New President

I am tremendously honored to serve as President of the Virginia Huguenot Society. To have your confidence is truly humbling, and I will certainly do my utmost to deserve it.

These are big shoes to fill. We owe outgoing President Dr. Gus Lewis a huge debt of gratitude for a job well done. Without hesitation Gus was ready whenever duty called. His steady hand at the helm certainly enhanced our VHS community.

We have much to look forward to in the coming year. Conservation of William D. Washington's painting *Attack on the Huguenots* will be completed. Our newsletter is expanding. Our membership is increasing. And with the pandemic behind us our meetings will see significantly increased attendance.

As usual, any ideas or suggestions, large or small, are most welcome.

Thank you for your kind friendship and support.

In Huguenot Faith,
Louis T. March

Please Welcome Our Newest Member to the Virginia Huguenot Society:

Lois "Diann" Rader Snyder
1344 Chatham Road
Waynesboro, VA 22980
graciepatricia@hotmail.com
540-241-1623 (cell); 540-943-3376
Member # 7-518
Ancestor: Casper Diller

**NEW
MEMBER**

Help our Society grow and become even more effective by inviting your family members and others interested in history, their family, and genealogy to become a member of the VHS.

New Officers of the Society

At the March 2021 meeting the following members were elected to Officer & Council positions for the term of March 2021 - March 2023. We thank them for honoring our ancestors and their sacrifices by taking these positions and serving and furthering the Society today. Please give them your full support.

President:

Louis T. March

Vice President:

Constance Paradisio

Secretary: Nancy Agee

Treasurer: Ann Darst

Registrar: Bonnie Bew

Chaplain: Heath Thompson

Historian/Librarian:

David LeGrande

Immediate Past President:

Augustine "Gus" Lewis, MD

Council for 2021-2022 -

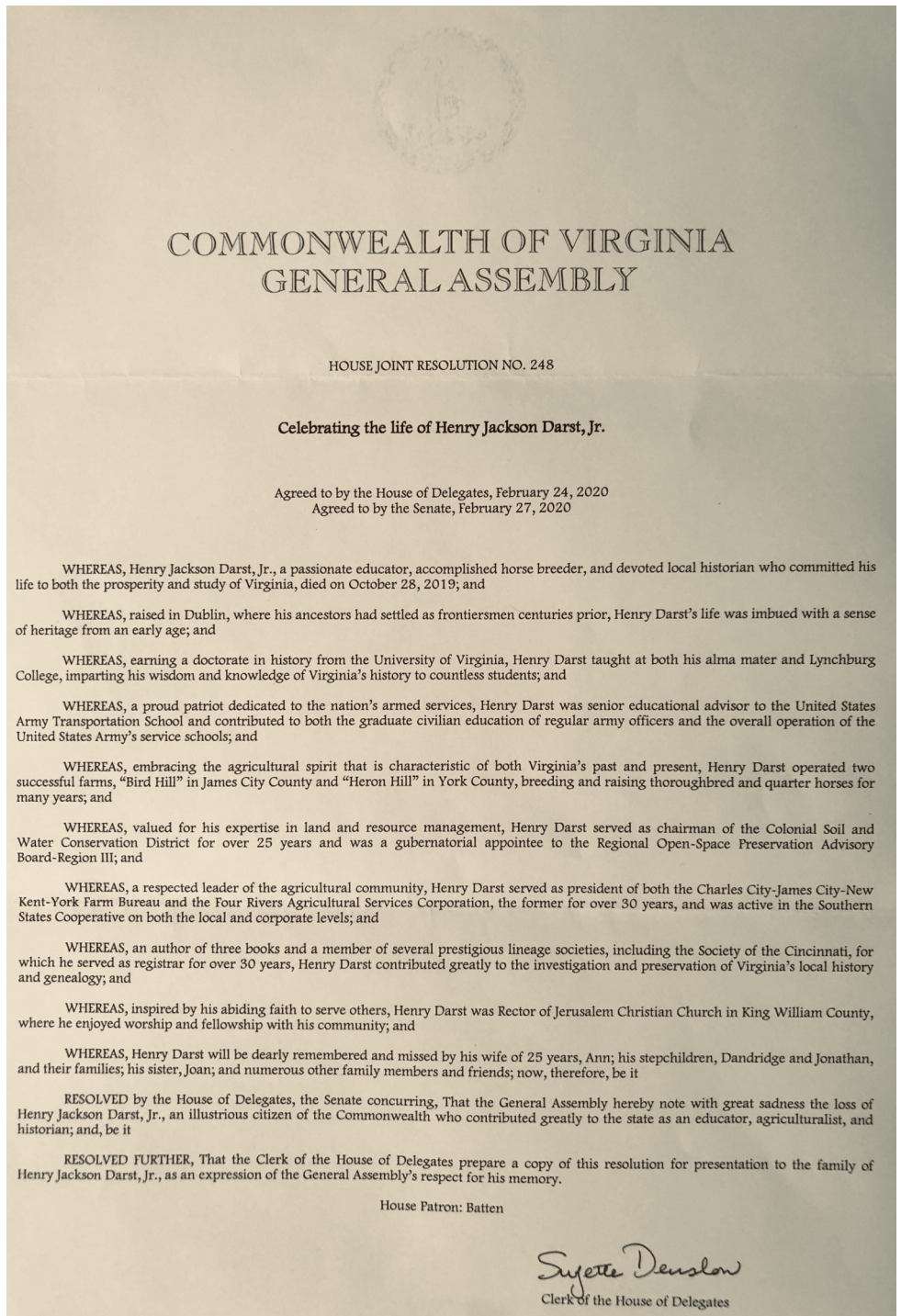
Del Agee, Paul Morrisette,
Joyce Collier

Council for 2021-2023 -

Suzanne Reynolds, Dennis
Fritts, Gerald Runyan

Special Honor for Henry Jackson Darst, Jr.

H. Jackson Darst, Jr., who died October 28, 2019, a pillar of the Virginia Huguenot Society, was honored by the Commonwealth of Virginia with a Resolution of the Joint Houses of the Virginia General Assembly on February 27, 2020. This Resolution is a meaningful document and personifies the dedication, perseverance, sacrifice, and ministering to others exhibited by Jackson throughout his life. He is still missed by all who knew him and had the privilege to work with him in any capacity. Here is the Resolution in its entirety.



Future Meeting Sites

If you have a favorite location to suggest for our meeting, or a speaker you feel our members would be interested in hearing, please contact President Louis March at 540-960-0504 or email him at marchlouis@aol.com.

Puryears in Mecklenburg County

Many third generation French Huguenot Puryear descendants had migrated from Warwick County to what was to become Mecklenburg County, Virginia by the 1740's. Katherine B. Elliott, a local Mecklenburg historian and author, published two companion volumes in 1962 and 1963, *Marriage Records 1765-1810 Mecklenburg County Virginia* and *Marriage Records 1811-1853 Mecklenburg County Virginia*, which located marriages in ministers' returns and individual marriage bonds in the Mecklenburg Clerk's Office. Her research reveals the following information about marriages with Puryear surnames:

1765-1810-15 Puryear males;
12 Puryear females

1811-1853-26 Puryear males;
29 Puryear females

In 2003 the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) published the book *Two Architectural and Historical Surveys of Boydton and Clarksville*. The study consists of mapping, photographing, and creating files of buildings, archaeological resources, and sites which are significant in understanding local history. The University of Virginia School of Architecture and a professional firm, History Matters, Inc., performed the surveys. VDHR subsequently filed the information in its Richmond archives and the participating localities.

The Clarksville Inventory includes a home built by one of the Mecklenburg French Huguenot ancestors. It includes the following about the residence:

"214 Fifth Street - One of the oldest dwellings in Clarksville, this two-story, four-bay, frame house has a gable roof and four exterior end chimneys, two with double shoulders and two

with single shoulders. The house is clad in wood, and there is a center wall dormer on the façade. A three-bay porch extends across a portion of the façade. The house appears to retain some of its original windows with nine-over-nine and six-over-six sash. The entry has double-leaf paneled doors with shutters. The house has undergone several alterations but appears to date to the 1820's. It is thought to have been built for William Puryear, and later owned by the Vaughan family." (VDHR ID: 192-0121-0155) Page 94.

A color photograph of the property shows the following on page 72:

"Plate 13. Number 214 is obviously an evolved building. Its low proportions and odd off-center wall dormer are clues to its complicated past."



To the right side of this photograph is a portion of Clarksville Baptist Church. I attended this church weekly until I was 18 years old. Ron and I married here in 1971. I never knew the history attached to this home or others in the town until the publication of the book.

Several years ago the house was listed for sale. It had been occupied by several generations of the Wood family and passed to the owner's

(Continued on page 7)

Can Huguenot Descendants get French Citizenship?

French citizenship grants its beholder many rights and privileges, including travel and ability to work in European Union countries, voting rights, settlement freedom in various former colonies, and national healthcare. So, can Huguenot descendants get in on these benefits? There are a few factors to consider...

First, a Huguenot descendant would want to consider dual nationality laws in France and their current country of citizenship. France allows its citizens to have dual citizenship. The US allows dual citizenship also, so Huguenot descendants who are citizens in the US are in the clear.

The descendant of a French person would need to investigate French laws on citizenship by *jus sanguinis*. *Jus sanguinis*, right of blood, refers to nationality and/or ethnicity of direct relations. Citizenship based on *jus sanguinis*, the kind Huguenot descendants would be able to get, have changed throughout history in response to political and social motivations.

In 1790, the French government passed a law granting the descendants of French men and women who fled religious persecution the right to citizenship in France by *jus sanguinis*. The law did not mention Huguenots specifically, but certainly included them as a large portion of those who would fit the description of the religiously persecuted. The 1790 Law Regarding the Property of Religious Fugitives cited that "All persons born in a foreign country who are descendants, to any degree, of a French man or French woman who was expatriated for

religious reasons, are declared French, and shall enjoy the rights [of citizenship] if they return to France, establish their domicile in France and take the civic oath."

On October 19, 1945, Charles de Gaulle's Free French government passed a new nationality code through ordonnance, which rescinded the right to citizenship for descendants of those who fled religious persecution.

So where does that leave descendants today? Barring any more recent French connections, Huguenot descendants hors-France are not entitled to French citizenship unless a Huguenot ancestor received citizenship prior to the 1945 nationality code.

French nationality laws are complex and consistently updated, so there may be other circumstances through which Huguenot descendants can acquire

citizenship. Nevertheless, Huguenot descendants' citizenship rights were by and large rescinded in 1945, allowing only those with a perfect alignment of circumstances to gain citizenship by way of lineage under current *jus sanguinis* law. The majority of Huguenot descendants today would need to go by way of naturalization to achieve the rights and privileges of French citizenship, as would anyone else, Huguenot-related or not.



Note: This is an abridged version of an article that was posted on the Huguenot Society of South Carolina web site November 3, 2020. It was written by Melissa McLaughlin. The article was on their website at www.huguenotsociety.org. Unfortunately I was unable to bring the article up again. If you would like to read the entire article contact me at gerald@aercorp.com or 757-775-1669.

Current Status of the Restoration and Framing of the Painting *Attack on the Huguenots*

This work has been restored and conserved by the Richmond Conservation Studio. It is currently in storage at the Studio. After some difficulty in finding a framing studio who could do the level and quality of work necessary to properly frame this large painting at price within the budget, and who could assist in choosing a type and style of frame suitable for this mid 19th century piece, The Fralin Art and Frame Shop in Richmond was chosen.

A frame for a large piece such as our work is actually constructed in three phases. Each phase has to be completed, in order, and the small elements need to be hand fitted together. It takes time to complete the job. The good news is that, barring something unexpected, the frame should be ready to mount on the picture in about six weeks. We will keep you informed of progress. Many thanks to all who supported this endeavor and we all look forward to seeing it hung in the Preston Library at VMI.



*A computer generated rendering
of the finished frame.*

Insignia of the Huguenot Society

The Huguenot Cross has eight points which stand for the Beatitudes from the Book of Matthew in the New Testament. Between each arm of the cross is a fleur-de-lis or lily, representing purity. Suspended from the bottom is a dove signifying the Holy Spirit. The Huguenot Cross was designed and first manufactured in 1688.



Donations for Special Projects

Please consider making a donation to VHS to use to aid in future projects. The Virginia Huguenot Society is a properly recognized 501c3 organization and as such all donations are tax deductible. We have met our commitment for the painting and remain very solvent; however, your financial assistance will take us even further with activities that enhance our status within the Historical/Heritage communities, and more importantly to the general public. Donations can be sent to Ann Darst, VHS Treasurer, 409 Oak Tree Road, Williamsburg, VA 23188.



Huguenots in Historical Fiction

David LeGrande



For anyone interested, the Kindle version of Paul C. R. Monk's historical fiction trilogy *The Huguenot Chronicles*, it is available for \$9.99 on Amazon.com. <https://www.amazon.com/Huguenot-Chronicles-Merchants-Virtue-Voyage-ebook/dp/B07H9C7LM3>

There are also two recently published historical fiction books set in the period of the Wars of Religion in France that are also of interest: Kate Mosse's *The Burning Chambers* and its sequel

City of Tears. Both come highly recommended for Huguenot folks—though keep in mind I have not read them.

Following are links to [Goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com) reviewing each volume:

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/36660443-the-burning-chambers?ac=1&from_search=true&qid=MCU0dhgoS2&rank=1

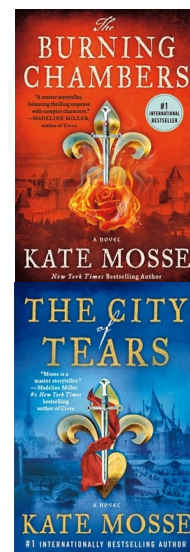
https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/49049622-the-city-of-tears?ac=1&from_search=true&qid=MCU0dhgoS2&rank=2

This is the author's Wikipedia page:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate_Mosse#Early_writing_and_the_Languedoc_Triology

Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.com/City-Tears-Burning-Chambers/dp/1509806873>



Links to Websites of Interest - Check Out These Links

Here are some interesting sites that explain some of the history of Huguenots

How were Huguenot refugees welcomed in England?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zpk9frd/revision/1>

Comparing 17th century to modern times

<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/11/wars-religion-france-polarization.html>

Huguenots in Rhode Island

https://www.independentri.com/independents/north_east/opinion/article_e8e95d93-4856-5ee1-9b19-019ace3c02ce.html



nephew who lived in the Raleigh-Durham area.

Before the closing there was an estate sale, which I was privileged to attend. Two rooms flanked each side of the center hall; two bedrooms comprised the upstairs. Fireplaces and flooring showed age but could be original.

Many of you who read this article may be descendants or relatives of the Puryear who built this home. Inevitably, time has and will continue to take its toll on the structure, but hopefully the study will instill a sense of pride and use of caution with future renovations by new owners.

Bonnie Blanks Bew

Many Thanks



Dear members of Virginia Huguenot Society:

Thank you for the beautiful flower arrangement you sent to me for my 102 birthday!

They were so pretty and lasted a very long time so I was able to enjoy them for many days.

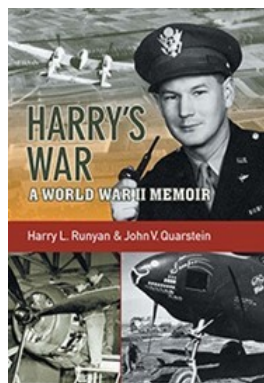
I miss all of you, my dear friends, but I am no longer able to attend.

My blessings to each of you.

In Huguenot love,
Lida Overton

Harry's War: A World War II Memorial

Gerald Runyan, has produced a new book on World War II based on his father's, Harry L. Runyan, Jr., written experiences during the war, and hundreds of actual wartime photographs which make this book an interesting and informative read.



Harry L. Runyan served the United States Air Forces as an engineering officer in the 30th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron during World War II. Supported by award-winning historian and author John V. Quarstein, Runyan shares his unique viewpoint of this world-changing event in *Harry's War: A World War II Memoir*.

Perfect for anyone interested in history, aviation, or life during the first half of the Twentieth Century. *Harry's War* describes the 30th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron history, from formation, through training and action, to final demobilization, as well as its "everyman" soldiers, like Runyan himself, who gave up safety, security, and loved ones to fight for victory.

As much a tale told in words, it is one told in compelling photographs taken by a young Runyan. Aerial closeups of destroyed cities, pre-D-Day dicing pictures showing the German defenses, high-altitude photos of the D-Day invasion, and personal snapshots of the men and the planes that carried out the war, both in action and going about their daily routines, offer glimpses into a world few have seen.

You can purchase the book on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, or signed copies through Gerald. Price is \$18.95. Email Gerald at gerald@aercorp.com or phone 757-775-1669.



The Virginia Huguenot Society
39 Madison Lane S
Newport News, VA 23606

President Louis March
marchlouis@aol.com

Registrar Constance Brooks Paradiso
paradiso@ntelos.net

May you all enjoy a sweet Virginia spring and summer!
See you on October 30, 2021, for our Fall Meeting!

