

Discount Furniture

April 2023  
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## Bursting with color

Spring — a time of new growth, warmer days and plenty of sunshine. Here in our area we have already seen daffodils blooming and showing off their vibrant yellow, white and sometimes shades of orange. Of course, with warmer days and gentle rains soon to follow are trees showing off their new coats and brightly colored flowers such as the ever lovely lilies.

With an array of colors and variations lilies are favored by many home gardeners. In this edition Dr. Cynthia Wood shares some of the history of lilies and that there are more than 600 species – who knew! For tips on how, where to plant and more turn to Page 12.

On the cover of this edition is a smiling Boo Fulcher, owner of Discount Fabrics. Fulcher has plenty to smile about as this family business has been, and continues to be, successful for over 30 years. Ireland Seagle had a chance to catch up with Fulcher and find out just what makes this business



**Betty Ramsey,**  
Publisher

so successful. As a business person and a fellow lover of fabric, I found this story particularly interesting and I'm sure you will too.

Farmville the Magazine strives to tell the story of our community. We are blessed and grateful to be a part of this community and are thankful that there are so many great stories to share.

Within these pages you will find more stories and we hope you will enjoy reading them as much as we enjoy bringing them to you. This is a magazine about and for you, we welcome your ideas and invite you to share with us what you would like to hear more about by sending us a note at P.O. Box 307, Farmville, VA , 23901, giving us a call at (434) 392-4151 or sending me an email at [Betty.Ramsey@FarmvilletheMag.com](mailto:Betty.Ramsey@FarmvilletheMag.com).

We publish *Farmville the Magazine* in March, April, May, summer, September, October, November and December. We invite you to pick up a copy of the latest issue as there is sure to be someone you know inside — a neighbor, a family member, a friend or perhaps even you!

*Betty Ramsey is publisher of Farmville the Magazine.  
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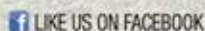


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On the cover: Boo Fulcher, owner of Discount Fabrics, stands in front of his store.



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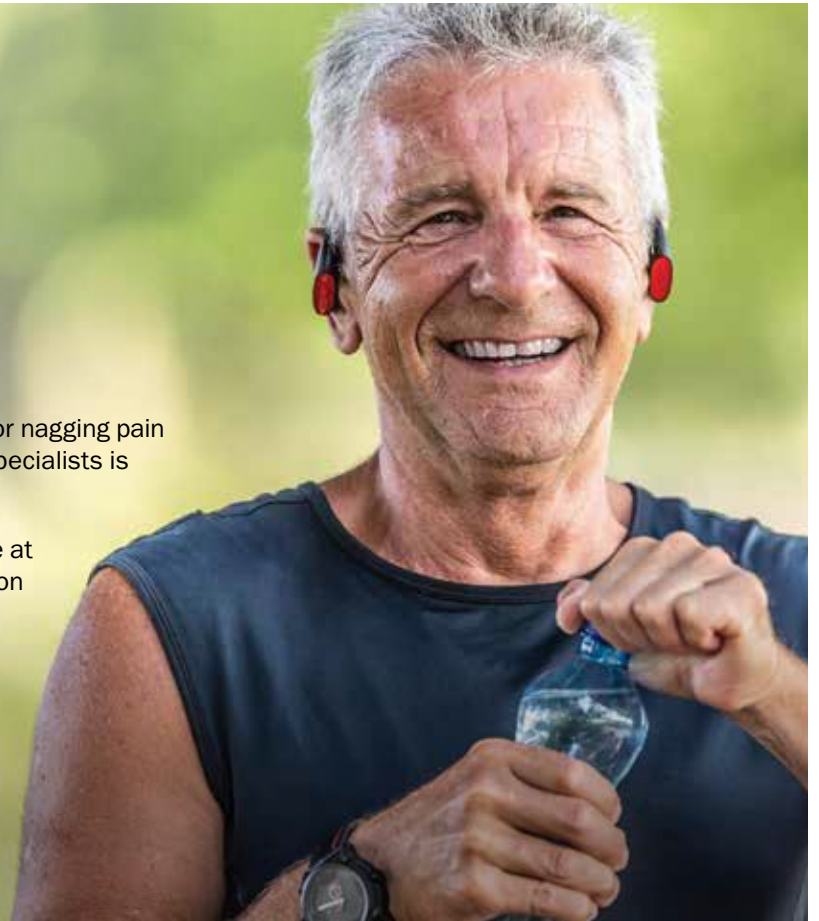
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# DISCOUNT FABRICS: FAMILY BUSINESS BECOMES A LOCAL SUCCESS



Boo Fulcher at his sewing machine in the workroom, working on a pillow cover.

### Story and Photos by Ireland Seagle

In between Amish Originals and Strutz on Main Street in downtown Farmville, a store with living room-styled window displays catches your eye. As you walk through the doors of Discount Fabrics, you see a wide array of brightly colored products: rugs, lamps, furniture, home décor, fabric. While perusing the range of available products, a friendly staff member greets you. Another sales associate assists customers looking for custom draperies and rugs. This is your experience at Discount Fabrics, a family-owned small business in the Farmville community.

A little over 30 years ago in 1989, owner and president Boo Fulcher, who grew up in Prospect and Farmville, established Discount Fabrics with the assistance of his mother, Phyllis Fulcher.

Phyllis had a discount clothing store in Rice when Boo was in high school. Due to her injuries from a car accident, Phyllis closed her store and approached Boo about either starting his own fabric business or staying in school. Boo decided to pursue a fabric business and is grateful for his mother's efforts. "My mother was very instrumental. If she had not been willing to help me start this business, it probably wouldn't have happened," said Boo.

In its first few years of operation, the business was originally called Main Street Discount Fabrics due to its location at 308 North Main Street near present-day Walker's Diner and The Outdoor Adventure Store. At the time, the business primarily sold dress fabrics for clothes-making

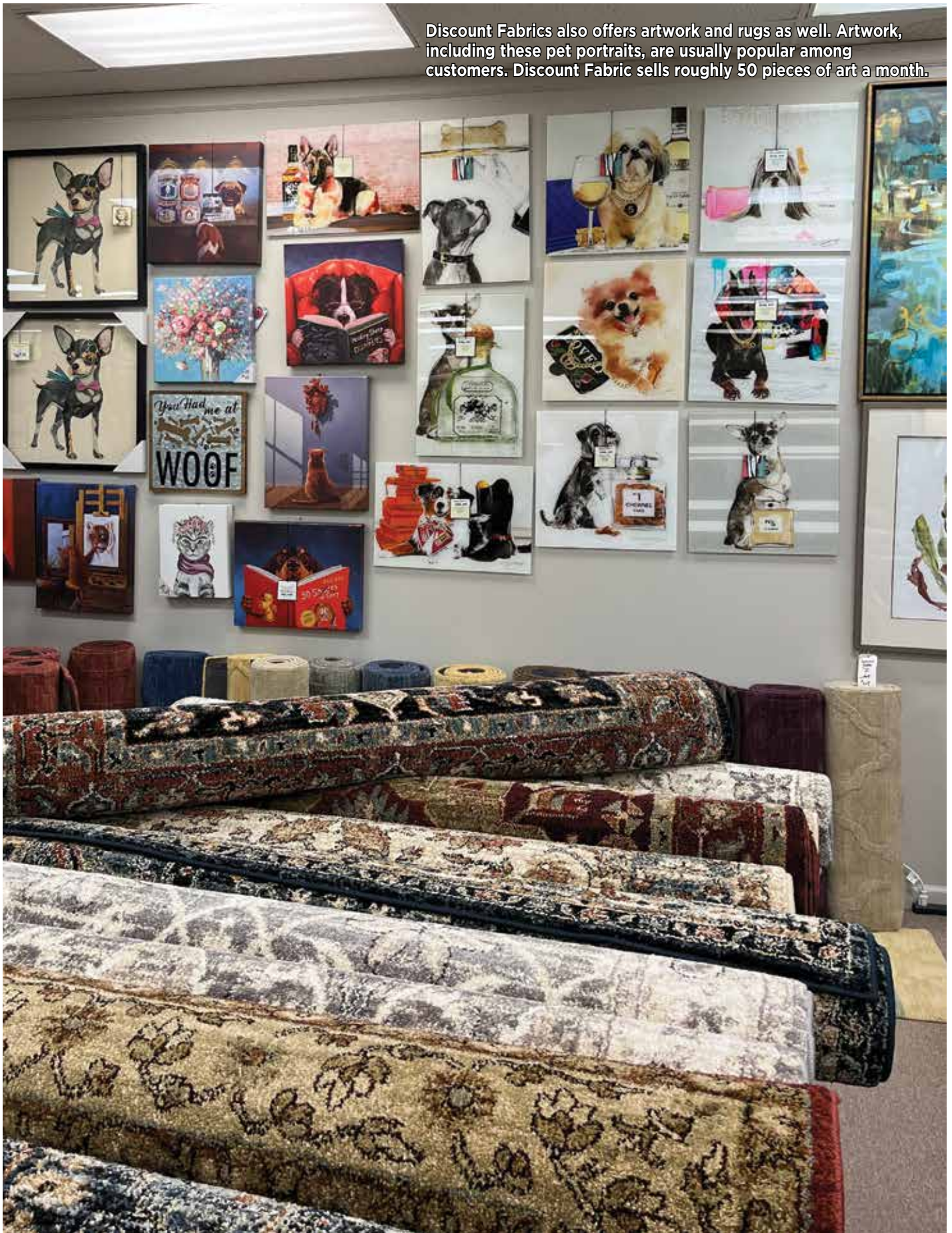
since many individuals either made or repaired their clothes themselves; however, the Fulchers also stored fabric remnants for home goods in the back of the store. "My mom was very active in the beginning with selling and traveling... to find new suppliers. She was very discount-minded, and that's where the (business) name came from," said Boo.

Along with his mother, his childhood experiences with creative maternal figures also inspired Boo to follow his own artistic hobbies. Since one of his grandmothers and great-grandmothers lived near his family, he grew up surrounded by a range of crafts: sewing, quilting, clothes-making and even upholstery and drapery-making. "I had an interest in the fabric: the touch, the feel and



**Boo Fulcher, left, and Pam Southall discuss the color palette for a customer's project.**

Discount Fabrics also offers artwork and rugs as well. Artwork, including these pet portraits, are usually popular among customers. Discount Fabric sells roughly 50 pieces of art a month.





what you could do with it," said Boo.

After spending almost three years at their original location, Discount Fabrics moved to 115 East Second Street near present-day Penelope. With their move, Boo and his mother changed the business' name to its current label and broadened their variety of offered products. Instead of selling only dress and clothes fabrics, Fulcher focused on offering fabrics to decorate homes. "I never was into clothes-making, so the change was fine with me," joked Boo.

During this portion of the business' journey, Boo worked closely with a fabric professional who influenced the future of Discount Fabrics' products, services and structure. To adhere to customers' desires for in-house custom products instead of referrals to other businesses, Boo hired an individual who previously ran a custom workroom in Seattle, Washington. Through her assistance, Boo "was able to get first-hand (experience) on what a professional workroom looked like on a small scale." He also learned the basics of production, especially of custom work. Although this individual only worked with Boo for five years, he is grateful for her

expertise. "Five years of hands-on (experience) from a veteran professional was like a lifetime of schooling," said Boo. This creative professional's knowledge provided inspiration for Discount Fabrics' future custom products and helped Boo gain confidence in his trade.

After 18 years on East Second Street, Discount Fabrics moved a second time to its current location at 211 North Main Street. Today, the business offers a variety of products and services, including décor accessories and rugs. "We measure, consult, fabricate and install...We can help with paint and room scenarios." The business also offers re-upholstering services that are completed in Southwest Virginia by a third-generation upholsterer.

Amongst the business' variety of items and services, the most popular and bestselling products are custom made, which include window treatments, pillows and even bedding. "We probably fabricate 75% of these soft goods here because I like the hands-on aspect, and it allows us keep an eye on the quality as the process goes along." Due to its diversification in products and amenities, Boo has considered changing the

name of Discount Fabrics to reflect the business' growth. "We toyed with changing the name, but most people say don't because...we still offer a value product."

Throughout his business' journey, Boo has had the support of several family members. "(Discount Fabrics) has been a family affair from the start," said Boo. Both of his sisters worked alongside him in the workroom and fabrication area. "My grandmother, in the early days, would hand-hem in the workroom at 75-years-old," said Boo. In addition, one of his great aunts, who was a veteran garment seamstress, worked solely in the fabrication area for 15 years. "It's been very helpful to have that older mindset. I'm thankful for the knowledge from my grandmother and great-aunt."

Although Discount Fabrics has changed over the years, Boo's favorite aspect of the job has always been interacting with customers. "I like being able to provide scenarios and get customers' feedback on the scenarios...The customers are very receptive to what you suggest, and that's very rewarding," said Boo. The majority of the business' customers are either repeat clients or

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individuals referred to Discount Fabrics. In addition to local customers in Farmville, the business also has clients from the Richmond, Lynchburg and Charlottesville markets.

When not working at Discount Fabrics, Boo enjoys cooking and watching movies with his poodles: Charlotte, Sammy and Cleo. He also enjoys taking day trips to Richmond and

Virginia Beach. If Boo is looking to “have a nice dinner and do a little shopping” near home, he said Richmond is the spot. “If I can spend the night, I love to go to the beach... It’s good for the soul.”

In the future, Boo envisions Discount Fabrics continuing to offer unique products that can be customized to the client and are accessible to

the Farmville and surrounding communities. “I think there’s always going to be a need for it,” said Boo. He also imagines Discount Fabrics becoming more specialized and more designer focused. Ultimately, Boo aims to “continue improving on what we offer with new selections and...services and cultivating new team members who can help us with that.”



Above is a before picture of a room that Discount Fabrics helped redecorate and below is the after picture. Photo provided by Discount Fabrics.





Above is a before picture of an antique chair reupholstery job and at right is the after picture. Photo provided by Discount Fabrics.




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From the Ground Up |

# AMAZING LILIES

## FOR THE HOME GARDEN

Lilies are popular and long-lasting additions to floral arrangements.

**Story and Photos by Dr. Cynthia Wood**

Humans have been growing lilies since at least 2000 BCE. They have been used to treat wounds, fevers, and arthritis; grown for food; and revered as symbols of purity, love, and beauty. The ancient Assyrians, Egyptians, and Greeks all grew lilies. During the Victorian Era, botanists scoured Asia for new species. Lilies are still popular today. They're favorites for use in floral arrangements for both weddings and funerals; during Easter, thousands of potted lilies are purchased for display in homes and churches. Other types of lilies are frequently used in gardens and container plantings.

The Lily Family has traditionally been large and included many different plants (*Lilium sensu lato*). Over the past 40 years, however, new DNA information has been used to reclassify many members and move them to new families. Some favorite plants, including many that are commonly called lilies, are no longer considered true lilies. For example: lily-of-the valley, crinum lilies, rain lilies, scilla, hyacinths, pineapple lilies,



Native trout lilies interplanted with spring beauties are a perfect way to announce spring.




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Photo by David Fowlkes  
Midsummer gardens won't look droopy when planted with vibrant tiger lilies, crinum, and phlox.

and daylilies. Tulips, however, are still included in the Lily Family. Don't be surprised to find confusion in texts and online articles about which plants are still included in the Lily Family.

The newly revised Lily Family includes 16 genera and more than 600 species that are mostly native to the temperate and sub-tropical regions of the northern hemisphere. They are erect perennials that are monocots, meaning they have a single seed leaf, strap-shaped leaves with parallel veins, and flowers with three parts. They grow from bulbs and usually have either solitary or clustered blooms that are often trumpet shaped and fragrant.

Generations of gardeners have planted lilies. They're easy to grow, make showy displays, last longer than most other flowers in cut flower arrangements, and can provide interest throughout the growing season. There are many choices, depending on height, color preference, bloom period, and fragrance.

The Stargazer lily is a tall Oriental hybrid that was an important development in hybrid oriental lilies. It was the first to have outward facing flowers. In mid to late summer, it produces large, very fragrant blooms that are deep pink, speckled with blackish brown, and edged with white. It

grows best in a sunny location. The bulbs are large and should be planted at least six inches deep. Stargazer lilies are excellent accent plants for use in perennial beds and container plantings.

The Asiatic hybrids are the earliest blooming hybrid lilies. They grow three to four feet tall and have blooms in an array of colors – red, purple, pink, orange, yellow, and even bi-colors. They aren't fragrant. Asiatic lilies are effective when planted in masses or in groups of three or five, and they are relatively deer resistant.

The tiger lily (*Lilium longifolium* or *L. tigrinum*) is an old garden plant much loved by the Victorians. It's hardy and has a long bloom period. The traditional species tiger lily has recurved orange petals with purplish black spots and produces aerial bulbils in the leaf axils. The stems are very sturdy and don't require staking. Tiger lilies multiply freely and work well in areas where they're allowed to naturalize. They're also striking when planted with cannas and dahlias.

The Formosa lily (*Lilium formosanum*) is another species lily; the specific epithet, *formosanum* means beautiful and also refers to the old name for Taiwan, Formosa, where it's native. This lily loves the heat and humidity of late Virginia summers. The Formosa lily grows

five to eight feet tall and is topped with pendant, trumpet-shaped white flowers that are fragrant. It's perfect for adding drama to cottage gardens and the back of perennial beds.

Native Virginia lilies are also excellent choices for the home garden. Trout lilies (*Erythronium americanum*) bloom in early spring. Mature plants have two dark green leaves mottled with purplish brown and a single yellow bloom with recurved petals. The Turk's-cap lily (*Lilium superbum*) is the tallest lily native to Virginia. It grows four to six feet tall and produces a chandelier-like arrangement of downward facing orange flowers with sharply recurved petals that form a "turban-like" shape. The Turk's-cap lily attracts many pollinators.

In general, lilies are easy to grow. They require well-drained, rich soil and sunny to partially shady locations. When planting lily bulbs, position them so that the top is about two inches below the soil line. Grow oriental lilies in slightly acidic soil and Asiatic lilies in neutral to alkaline soil. Tall lilies should be staked or interplanted with sturdy plants that will support them. Mulch the soil around lilies to help retain moisture. When they begin to bloom, fertilize every two weeks. Remove spent blooms as they occur.



Photo by Chris Rogers

B & M Greenhouse has scores of Easter lilies ready for customers. Can you spot Lorena the cat?

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# Where Am I?



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# Catching Up With |

## Brianna LaFratta

Brianna LaFratta is making a name for herself in the science world.

The 2020 Longwood University graduate is putting her biology degree to work in Philadelphia with Thermo Fisher Scientific in pharmaceutical documentation.

Before that LaFratta was in Richmond for two years as an Immunochemistry lab scientist.

LaFratta said she lives by the motto, “How you spend your days is of course how you spend your life,” by Annie Dillard.

During her time at Longwood, LaFratta took part in a paid research position at the University, most likely helping to pave the way for her career in science today.

Even though she’s making a life in Philadelphia, LaFratta says she misses Farmville.

“I love the community and small-town feeling,” she said. “I enjoyed community events/volunteer opportunities and now I miss being so close to friends all the time.”

LaFratta said it was the mentors she had while at Longwood that she credits her success to. “I was able to meet so many different people, and the professors I had encouraged me often and helped me through difficult decisions,” she explained.

Though how she spends her days may be how she spends her life, when LaFratta is not in the world of science, she says she spends her time reading a lot of fiction and spending a lot of time in the park near her apartment.



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# DUNNINGTON MANSION: *Plans to save it are going strong*



Photos by Connor Thompson, Burruss Farmscapes and submitted by the Dunnington Mansion Foundation and the Dunnington Family

You can trace the history of Dunnington Mansion all the way back to 1748, when Richard Woodson received an 1152 acre land grant from King George II. He built a small, four room wooden house on the property and named his farm Poplar Hill.

That was the first step in what's become more than 250 years of history on the property. For this edition, we thought it would be interesting to trace back through each of those owners, spotlighting how the property's changed hands through the years and what the Dunnington Mansion Foundation (DMF) is doing to restore it. Throughout this piece, we'll step in from time to time, providing notes about specific owners and events that took place.

#### **OWNERSHIP TIMELINE FROM 1748 TO 2000**

- 1748 – Richard “Baron” Woodson received an 1152 acre land grant from King George II.
- 1775 – The small house Woodson built and the property were willed to Richard “Baron”

Woodson's daughter Agnes (Woodson) Watkins and her husband Francis Watkins.

- 1826 – Francis Watkins willed the property to his daughter Frances (Watkins) Wood and her husband James D. Wood. The original brick portion of the home was constructed circa 1830/1840. This was a completely separate structure than the above-mentioned house.
- 1849 – Frances and James Wood passed the property to their son Francis “Frank” Wood and his wife Paulina.
- 1860 – Frank and Paulina Wood sold the property to John Hughes Knight Jr. and his wife Cornelia Alice Bland, thus ending Poplar Hill's 100+ year history in the Woodson/Watkins/Wood family. Knight was a captain in the Confederate army. His daughter India was around four years old when they moved into Poplar Hill.
- 1892 – Captain Knight willed the property to his daughter India and her husband Walter Grey Dunnington. Walter was one of Virginia's prominent tobacco barons. The Knights were given lifetime rights to live at Poplar Hill. Alice

died in 1899 and John died in 1914.

- 1897 – Dunnington extensively renovated the house, creating the sprawling mansion that is seen today. He added four rooms and the massive tower and stately front entrance. This addition changed the orientation of the house from north/south to east/west. The front of the house now faces west.
- 1922 – 1960 — After his death in 1922, Walter Grey Dunnington willed the house to his wife. The house would remain with India (Knight) Dunnington until her death in 1960. Her sister Betty also resided at Poplar Hill until her death in 1949.
- 1960 – 2000 – After India (Knight) Dunnington's passing in 1960, the house and surrounding 1000+ acres was sold in a sealed bid auction. Farmville locals Glen and Freeda Bolt purchased it.

#### **WHO WAS GLEN BOLT?**

Glen Bolt owned a sawmill business and harvested timber from the property to pay for his



purchase. Together with his son Nelson, Glen cleared an additional 400 acres and turned the property into a working cattle farm. They added numerous buildings to the property including two 180-foot state of the art barns and a silo for pre-conditioning beef cattle.

The Bolts also made several modernizations to the house. The coal burning furnace was converted to oil fuel, burning an average of 1000 gallons per month in the winter. Water was provided through a gravity-fed system from a private water tower. The Bolts changed it to a conventional pressure tank system about two years after purchasing the house.

The Bolt's also restored the interior of the house and made several updates. They put in a modern kitchen on the main floor, and they updated the bathrooms with new plumbing and fixtures. Prior to 1960 the kitchen and pantry were located in the basement. Light switches and outlets were also added to the older portion of the home.

**THE SITUATION AS IT STANDS NOW**

In 1999 the Bolt's sold the house and surrounding 1000+ acres to a group of local investors. There were plans to build a championship golf course on the property and the mansion was to be a focal part of this project. Most of the exterior buildings were removed to make way for golf course development. The only remaining outbuilding is the current golf cart shed which was previously used to store hay.

Unfortunately, after the golf course was completed, recession hit the U.S. hard and funding ran out for the project. In 2006, the mansion and some surrounding acres (not including the golf course) was sold to Irish investors. The house



This is a photo of a Christmas celebration held in the Dunnington Mansion back in its prime.

was left abandoned for decades. After a storm destroyed part of the roof over the older portion, water damage quickly accelerated the decay.

The house and some surrounding acres were listed for sale again in 2021. A group of local investors purchased it. In the spring of 2022, they began stabilization work on the mansion. Windows and doors were secured. The damaged roof was replaced, and part of the upper floor was stabilized. The collapsed portion of the porch was also removed and the area around the house cleared of brush. Their plan is to sell it to a development company for housing units.

**WHAT IS THE DUNNINGTON MANSION FOUNDATION?**

It started one night while scrolling through posts on the internet. Heather Beach came across photos of the Dunnington Mansion and fell in

love. At the time, she didn't know where it was or even what the name of the house was. All she knew is that someone had to save that house. And that's how a small animal veterinarian from the Shenandoah Valley developed an interest in creating and leading the DMF.

"I love antiques and old architecture and would decompress at night scrolling through Facebook groups focused on abandoned historical sites," Beach said. "Still, if 18 months ago, someone had told me I would become the founder of a nonprofit championing the salvation of an abandoned historical mansion in Farmville, I would have thought they were crazy."

After running across the photos, Beach had questions. Why was the Dunnington Mansion abandoned? Why was it on a golf course? And what would it take to save it?

"From then on, my days were spent helping

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These photos show some of the extensive damage to the inside of the mansion.



sick patients and my nights were spent researching what I now know is Poplar Hill, or Dunnington Mansion for those of us who are not local to Farmville,” Beach said. “I learned about the families who owned the property and spent time gathering stories from the Dunningtons and Bolts.”

In 2021, Beach founded the DMF, which is now a registered 501c3 nonprofit. She started

as the only board member, added a second and now the group is up to five. That group includes Beach; Ryan Murtagh, a professional photographer; John Prengaman, retired facilities director for Hampden-Sydney College; Ann Shields Stone, India Dunnington’s great-granddaughter, as well as a retired school teacher and finally, Clint Mooney, real estate agent and drone photographer.

And business, for the Foundation, is booming. In the last six months, the group formed collaborations with John Plashal Photography and with multiple classes at Longwood University. In October 2022, the Foundation partnered with a Longwood communications studies class to produce a promotional video. A public relations campaign class at the university is working with the group currently, trying to get more attention for the DMF.

And the group is working with photographer John Plashal to offer historical tours of the property as a fundraising opportunity. The first one in December included a historical presentation and stories from the Dunnington great-grandchildren. A second tour was held on Jan. 21 and there is one scheduled for April 29.

#### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

DMF is accepting donations to help with expenses, hiring of specialized consultants and soon, repair work. With permission from the current owner group, DMF is having general preservation consultants, structural engineers and roofing specialists evaluate the mansion and compile reports for the foundation. For more information visit [www.dunningtonmansion.org](http://www.dunningtonmansion.org).



These photos are from when the mansion was a jewel of its time.

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Centra Medical Group Orthopedics welcomes William Andrews, MD, FCCP, and William Fluker, PA-C. They join John Kona, MD, in the practice located at Centra Southside Medical Center.

Dr. Andrews earned his medical degree from Duke University. He completed his internship and surgery residency at University of Virginia Hospital and served his orthopedic residency at Duke University.

William Fluker, holds bachelor of science degrees in biology from the University of Kentucky and from the physician assistant program at James Madison University.



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