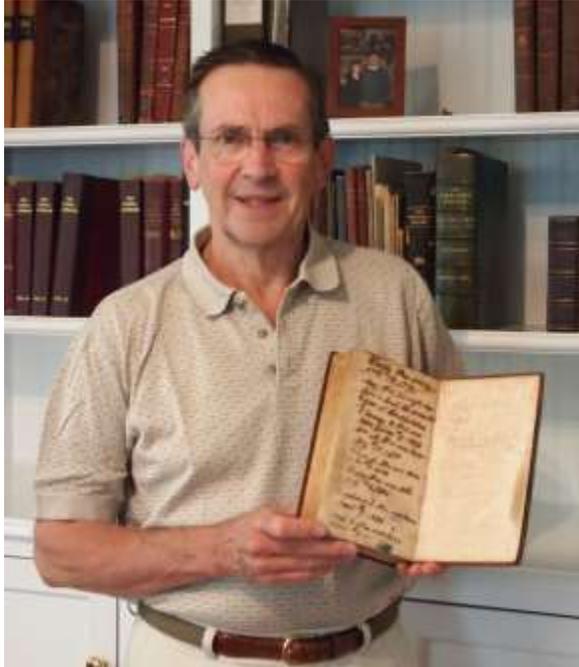


VIRGINIA MAN FINDS CHATHAM INFO IN OLD BOOK

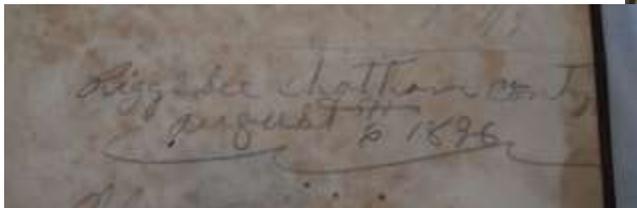
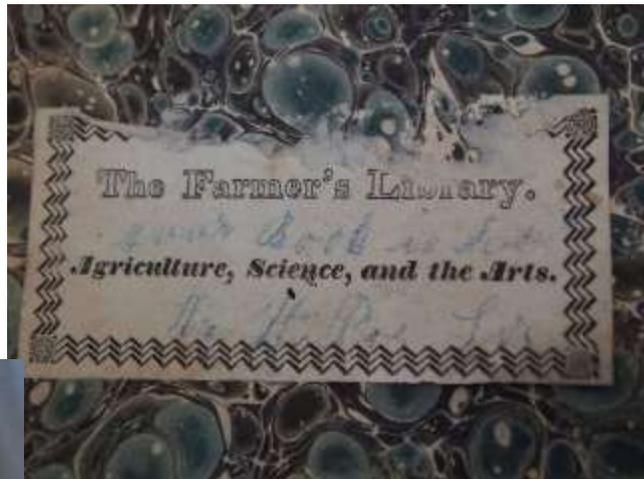


Dennis Dutterer is a collector of rare books. Occasionally, he finds a bonus in the books he has purchased-- interesting notes or family histories written on the end papers or in the margins. When that happens, he researches the notes for his own interest and then shares his discoveries with local history organizations.

Mr. Dutterer recently acquired a copy of John Marshall's *The Life of George Washington*, published by James Crissy in Philadelphia in 1834. There is a library bookplate pasted in on the inside of the front cover that reads "The Farmer's Library Agriculture, Science, and the Arts."

On the face of things, the book has no connection to Chatham County, North Carolina. But a note written in the book says "Riggsbee, Chatham County August 6, 1896." Riggsbee was a community in northern Chatham, near what is now Briar Chapel.

The reference to Riggsbee in Chatham County led Mr. Dutterer and historical association members to wonder whether the Farmer's Library referred to in the bookplate might have been an early Chatham County library association. Research into that question led to the discovery that, indeed, the Farmer's Library Association had been incorporated in Chatham County in 1833.



Little is known about the association, apart from the [act of incorporation](#) passed by the North Carolina General Assembly, but generally such societies were organized by men in a community who paid a small annual membership fee which was used to obtain books that then circulated among the subscribers. About thirty such societies were incorporated in North Carolina between 1794 and 1848. Chatham's Farmer's Library Association was one of these. These library societies were emblems of literate society and tokens of community pride.

When Mr. Dutterer discovered the notes and bookplate in his book, he notified the Chatham County Historical Association and encouraged the group to share the information with the Poe and Ivey families or anyone interested. The Historical Association regularly receives requests for information about old Chatham families, but seldom receives information like that Mr. Dutterer offered.

“We were delighted to receive this information,” said Jane Pyle, who responds to inquiries for the group, “and are so grateful that Mr. Dutterer took the time and effort to share it. Apart from grave markers, sources for birth and death information from the early 1800s can be very difficult to find. It’s possible that the information that Mr. Dutterer has sent to us isn’t recorded anywhere else.”

“We are also very pleased to learn about the early library association in the county. We would love to hear from anyone with more information about it. Perhaps others have books with the Farmer’s Library Association bookplate and can help us identify other members of that group,” Pyle said.

Mr. Dutterer has kindly supplied [photographs of the book](#) and of the pages with notations. CCHA researchers have compiled some [additional information about the Poe and Ivey families](#).

Mr. Dutterer has offered to be contacted by anyone who has additional questions:

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The Historical Association would like to hear from anyone who has information to add about the Poe and Ivey families, or about the Farmers’ Library Association. Email us at History@chathamhistory.org.