

**Princess Anne Chapter 435**  
**Division NO. 64**  
**Virginia Beach**

**Early History of the Princess Anne #435 Chapter**

The Princess Anne Chapter in Virginia Beach was originally chartered by seven women on January 14, 1901. Mrs. Virginia Whitehurst Woodhouse was elected President with a membership of 22. She was referred to as an efficient President. Early Virginia Division minutes indicate the purpose of the chapter was to unveil a monument at Princess Anne Courthouse.

Much of the early work of the chapter involved obtaining approval for the Princess Anne Monument. A monument committee was formed. On April 4, 1903, the Princess Anne Camp of the Confederate Veterans and Mrs. Virginia Woodhouse, President of Princess Anne Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, petitioned the General Assembly for permission to place a monument at the Princess Anne Courthouse. The women of the chapter were primary sponsors of the Confederate monument with the Princess Anne Mason Lodge No. 25, and the Princess Anne Sons of Confederate Veterans supporting.

Noted that in 1903, Mrs. A.J. Ackiss assumes the role of President of the Chapter, but Mrs. Virginia Woodhouse is found to be President all other years. At the October 1903 Virginia Convention, ladies of the chapter submitted this report: *"They made a box of fancy articles and sent them to the Jefferson Davis Bazaar in Richmond. Second Vice President, Miss Grace Woodhouse's watercolor painting sold for \$10 at the bazaar"*. It is unknown what the painting looked like. The chapter regularly met in the Mason building and the daughters periodically furnished dinners to the Masons of Princess Anne. On January 19, 1903, the chapter held a Confederate Reunion at which time the chapter bestowed Crosses of Honor on the Veterans of their county. In July 1903, they held a reunion at the Princess Anne Courthouse with speeches by several distinguished guest, including Governor Montague and General Fitzhugh Lee.

It is mentioned in the 1904 Virginia Division minutes that the monument is certain. The corner stone was laid with Masonic ceremonies. A large crowd was present, and a dinner of Lynnhaven oysters, ice-cream, etc. was served. The Daughters felt that the people of the county were very generous.

On the day of the unveiling, November 15, 1905, 1,500 people from across Tidewater, including Norfolk and Portsmouth, were present to witness the unveiling of the monument. After the ceremony, dinner was served by the Ladies of the Princess Anne Chapter to those in attendance.

Chapter members attended the 1907 Jamestown Exposition which was the 300-year Anniversary of Jamestown and the Virginia Colony.

Membership remained at 20-22 until a slight drop in 1909 at 19 members. It is visibly noticed that Princess Anne was not represented at Virginia Conventions consistently and often they did not submit a chapter report, and in 1913 Princess Anne is noted in the Virginia Division Minutes as being inactive.

Through the years membership dwelled, and after the death of Mrs. Woodhouse, one year later after, the chapter disbanded on September 8, 1928.

### **History after Reactivation**

Princess Anne 435 was reactivated sixty-eight years later on July 30, 1996, with Gail Sutliff serving as President for a brief time. When the chapter was reactivated, several members only wanted to meet three times a year, and the rest wanted to meet monthly. Gail and a small group of members decided to reactivate the Neimyer-Shaw Chapter and Gail was elected their President. Marguerite "Peggy" Hicks was then elected President of the Princess Anne Chapter. For years after the reactivation, the chapter met regularly at Historic Ferry Plantation and sponsored many "Civil War Days" at the Plantation.

At the time of the reactivation, the chapter was formed over 5 months with 26 members. During the early years after the reactivation, the ladies of the chapter held a memorial to Jefferson Davis at the Princess Anne Monument, a tour of the Memorial Building, and a tour of Elmwood Cemetery.

The chapter participated in the 100th Anniversary of the Princess Anne Monument in 2005. Until recently the chapter had participated in Civil War Days in Chesapeake, and the Strawberry and Peach Festivals.

The ladies of the chapter were present in April 2007 at the unveiling of the Grace Sherwood statue of the "Witch of Pungo" in support of UDC Associate member Belinda Nash who was successful with the monument erection after the Governor of Virginia pardoned the famous "Witch of Pungo".

The chapter sponsored the UDC marker for our founding member Virginia Elizabeth Whitehurst Woodhouse on January 17, 2009.

The chapter had been meeting at the Historic Ferry Plantation, but due to increasing membership and the popularity of tours on weekends, monthly meetings were moved to Gus & George's Restaurant in Virginia Beach. With the controversy surrounding the attack on our heritage, the owner became fearful of retaliation, so our meeting location changed in August 2020 to the Virginia Beach National Golf Club in Virginia Beach.

Each year, the chapter awards three-chapter scholarships to high school and undergraduate college students. These scholarships were distinguished further in 2021, naming the scholarships in memory of three women who were instrumental in the history of our chapter: Original members *Virginia Whitehurst Woodhouse* and *Grace Arlington Woodhouse*; and *Marguerite "Peggy" Belote Hicks*, who reactivated the chapter in 1996.

During the fall of 2019, the chapter sponsored the restoration of Stratford Hall's famous Nachtrieb portrait of Robert E. Lee. With an approximate cost of \$2500, the restoration was completed in August 2021. The chapter traveled to Stratford Hall and was presented the restored portrait on October 14, 2022 at the same time our members were given a private tour of the new Crossroads Museum Exhibit. During the tour, all ladies in attendance were allowed to hold Robert E. Lee's battle hat.

Throughout the years, the chapter has sponsored veterans at local veteran hospitals and overseas. Most recently a Special Ops Green Beret stationed in the Middle East. Since 2007 the chapter has been supporting the Virginia Beach VetHouse; and in 2022, the chapter adopted nursing home residents at Our Lady of Perpetual Health in Virginia Beach.

### **Increasing Controversy over Monuments**

Since the 2015 shooting at an Atlanta church, increasing protests were seen throughout the southern states for the removal of all Confederate Monuments due the many anti-racism protests. Sadly, in June 2020, city officials covered the monument and placed a barrier around it. The Virginia Beach Historic Preservation Commission was tasked with formulating a recommendation to the Virginia Beach City Council and recommended the statue remain but with additional interpretive plaques. In July 2020, however, the City Council voted to remove the statue. The statue was taken down on July 25, 2020, and remains in storage while the City Council considered proposals for relocation.

On July 11, 2023, the City Council of Virginia Beach voted unanimously to award the Princess Anne United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Princess Anne Sons of Confederate Veterans total and complete ownership of their beloved Confederate Monument along with a partnership with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation. It is anticipated that the monument will be completely re-erected by the end of the year on private property in the southern section of our city.



The photo from 1905 in Stephen Mansfield's 1989 book *Princess Anne County and Virginia Beach: A Pictorial History*, was provided by Phillip Kellam's late father Judge Richard Kellam.

### **List of Chapter Presidents in Chronicle Order:**

- Virginia Woodhouse 1901-1903, 1903-?1927
- Mrs. A.J. Ackiss 1903
- Gail Sutliff 1996 brief time
- Marguerite "Peggy" Hicks 1996-1999, 2001-2004, 2004-2007
- Edith Gomer 2000
- Sharon Stine 2004
- Anne Henley 2008-2015
- Joey Michael 2016-2017
- Jane Brumley 2017-2018
- Therese DeSanto 2019-Present

### **Recognitions**

**Monuments:** Princess Anne Confederate Monument, Virginia Beach Courthouse

### **Members who have served Division:**

- Peggy Hicks
  - Sixth District Chairperson
- Kathy Clifton
  - Virginia Division Custodian
  - Sixth District Chairperson
  - Honorary Virginia Division President
- Therese DeSanto
  - Virginia Division Historian
  - Media Committee
  - Sixth District Chairperson
  - Chapter History Virginia Division Chairperson

### **Awards:**

- Jefferson Davis Historical Gold Metal: Peggy Hicks, Kathy Clifton, Kenny Harris, Therese DeSanto
- Judah P. Benjamin Award: Kenny Harris
- Stonewall Jackson Award: Belinda Nash
- Winnie Davis Medal: Peggy Hicks, Ann Henley, Kathy Clifton
- Humanitarian Award: Ruby Harris
- Homeland Security Award: Ellen Wilkerson (Chapter), Elizabeth Baker (Chapter), Therese DeSanto (Division)