

## Missing Pittsylvania County Marriages

Mike K. Williams

More than 10 years ago while I was fully engaged in researching my family and several allied families I kept running into a situation that puzzled me. I was sure that a certain couple had married in Pittsylvania County but there was no record of the union at the court house in Chatham. This happened so many times that I grew suspicious. Were some marriages missing? How could this happen?

I knew the marriages had been typed in giant ledger books from old hand-written ones, probably in the 1970s. I took a notebook with the marriage records I had with me on a trip to the archives in Richmond where I sat all day comparing their microfilm records with those I brought with me. Soon I was finding marriages that were not on file in Chatham. I found more than five hundred! Most of the missing marriages were from the mid-1850s and early 1860s. I copied the information down. I had to hurry since I had only one day and I may have missed some. Without a portable computer, to say it was a tedious task is an understatement. But I knew I was on to something. No one knew anything about any missing records in Chatham.

I put the missing marriages in my computer and did a print-out to put in a binder. That list has never been available for public purchase but a copy exists at the Society's research room and one is at the clerk's office in Chatham.

So, if you're missing a marriage in Pittsylvania County during the middle 1800s, it may be one of the "missing marriages." If you go to Richmond their microfilm is complete, but if you go to Chatham be sure to look for that notebook there with the missing marriages I placed there. In the Society's research room they were incorporated into the marriage database in our computer, which has marriages from 1767-1925.