



CCHA Bulletin

MAY 2025

Caswell County Historical Association
THE OFFICIAL SITE OF THE CCHA & THE RICHMOND-MILES MUSEUM

A CASWELL MEMORIAL DAY SALUTE



Memorial Day Ceremony

Monday, May 26, 2025

Yanceyville Pavilion

North Avenue at Church Street

Time: 11:00 AM

Outdoor Event

Bring Your Lawn Chairs

Guest Speaker

John Gozjack

US Navy-Corpsman-Vietnam Veteran



SALUTE THE VETERANS OF
CASWELL COUNTY

*Yanceyville
Veterans Memorial*



A tribute to Caswell Resident, Julius Johnston III

On board of the USS Scorpion Submarine when it went down in 1968

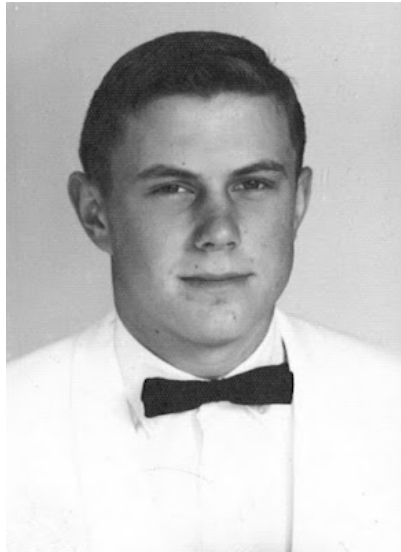
by Sandra Aldridge, CCHA Researcher/Writer

Julius Johnston, III, (Jules) grew up as part of a close-knit family and community on Main Street in Yanceyville. He attended the Yanceyville Methodist Church where generations of his family had worshiped. The shared values of moral integrity, kindness, and respect instilled in him a sense of honor, duty to community, and duty to nation.

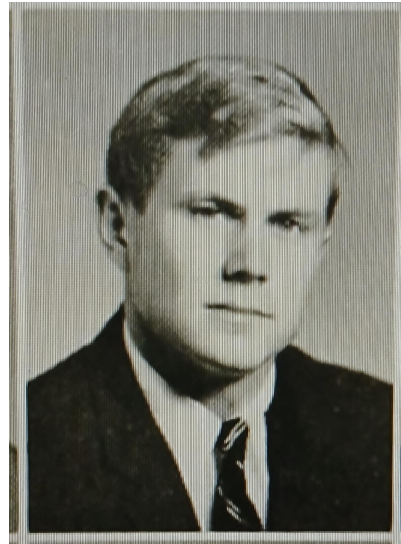
Jules developed a strong work ethic while working on the family tobacco farm. He enjoyed exploring the great outdoors. He loved hunting alongside his father and brothers with the family bird dogs. Richard, his older brother, said that as young boys they would walk through the town square with loaded guns and dogs on the lead to hunt on property located nearby.

Jules attended Bartlett Yancey High School, and he excelled both academically and athletically. He was a member of the Beta Club National Honor Society; an honor society requiring a GPA of 3.5 or better. Jules' leadership skills were recognized by his peers, and he was elected to the Student Council for his Sophomore, Junior, and Senior years. He served the student body as Vice-President his sophomore year and as President Senior year. Also, in his senior year, he was voted as the "Best All Around" student.

While attending Bartlett Yancey Jules shined in athletics. He played center fielder on the baseball team. He played basketball. His athletic prowess was also demonstrated on the football field where he played fullback. He was chosen as the best blocker his sophomore year. He served as Captain of the Football team in his senior year and named to the All-Mid State Football Team by the Burlington Times Newspaper. He was awarded the Clyde Cole trophy as the outstanding Senior football player at Bartlett Yancey High School.



Bartlett Yancey Senior Year



UNC Yearbook Photo

When interviewed, classmates said that he was a true 'big man on campus'. "Jules was one of the most respected students at school. He not only garnered respect, but he also gave it to the students and teachers. He could be relied upon for sound advice. At a youthful age Jules, had a 'command presence' of confidence, trust, poise, and authenticity". When Susan Creed Percy, formally Susan Page, was Miss Caswell County she chose him to be her escort to the Miss North Carolina pageant. She said that "he was a gentle, calming presence at a time I had occasional nerves".

In 1961, after graduating from Bartlett Yancey, he enrolled at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was a member of the Phi Kappa Alpha Fraternity. He graduated in 1965 with an Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science. His siblings, Vida and Richard, said his life goal was to graduate from UNC Law School and return to Caswell County and become a "good country lawyer". The legacy of attorneys beginning with his grandfather, Julius Johnston, Sr (1856-1914) continues today. Richard's sons, Julius Johnston, IV practices law in New York and His nephew, William Russell Johnston, currently serves as the county attorney for Caswell.

The sense of duty was important to the Johnston Family. Jules and his brother Richard, who was 18 months older, decided to serve in the armed forces. Richard graduated from NC State in 1964. Richard joined the United States Army at the rank of First Lieutenant. He served eleven months in Vietnam as an Army Ranger.

Jules entered the US Navy in October of 1965. He was chosen as the outstanding trainee at his Navy bootcamp in Great Lakes, IL., receiving the "Honor Man" trophy. He requested submarine duty. Jules received training at the Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Conn. His sister, Vida, said he chose this because he "wanted something different and adventurous".

He served in the Gold Crew of the first ballistic missile submarine, *Nathan Hale*, for approximately 2 years. He requested a transfer to the "fast attack" nuclear submarine fleet and reported for duty on the *USS Scorpion* (SSN 589) in January of 1968. He held the rank of Quartermaster Second Class. The submarine left Norfolk on February 15th for duties in the Mediterranean. After conducting operations with the Sixth Fleet and Nato for three months they began the trip home. On May 21st, the submarine reported its position approximately fifty miles south of the Azores. The Azores are a group of nine islands in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, halfway between the USA and Portugal.



The *Scorpion* was due to return to her homeport of Norfolk, VA, on May 17, 1968, at 13:00 (1:00 p.m.) local time. Navy officials at Submarine Squadron 6 in Norfolk expected the submarine to surface off the Virginia Capes in the late morning and establish radio contact before entering the port. On that day, a Nor'easter was pounding southwest Virginia. Despite the torrential downpours and blustery cold winds, several family members waited for its arrival on Pier 22.

The arrival time of 1:00 p.m. came and went. There was no sign of the submarine and family members were advised to go home and wait for an update. The families had only been informed that the *Scorpion* had not yet broken radio silence to signal its approach to the port. The delay was due to the bad weather in the area. They were unaware that the Atlantic fleet had launched a massive sea and air search.

Shortly after 6 p.m., WTAR-TV, the CBS affiliate in Norfolk, citing anonymous Navy sources, reported that the *Scorpion* was missing. Richard Johnston and Vida Johnston Willis remembered hearing the news of the missing submarine on the nightly news.

Richard said that he knew “that was not good”. Vida stated that as they were listening to the reports, there was a knock on the front door. Naval officials notified his parents, Richard and Harriet Johnston, that the submarine was declared legally missing.

During the next week dozens of ships and patrol aircraft searched the open sea. They found nothing. On June 5, 1968, the *Scorpion* and her ninety-nine crew members were declared “presumed lost”. At the end of October 1968, the Navy's oceanographic research ship, *Mizar*, located sections of the hull of *Scorpion* on the seabed; about four hundred nautical miles southwest of the Azores under more than 9,800 ft of water.

The exact reason for the sinking of the submarine remains a mystery after almost 57 years. Several theories and speculations exist. The official position of the U.S. Navy remains the same today as then. The Naval records from the court of inquiry are: “The Chief of Naval Operations concurs with the Court's opinion that the certain cause for the loss of SCORPION is not ascertainable.”

Memorial services were held at the Yanceyville Methodist Church with the Revrand A.B. Falls and Navy Chaplain Emmett O. Floyd officiating. A cenotaph was placed in the cemetery of the Yanceyville Methodist Church.

Julius Johnston, III was survived by his parents, Richard (Honey) Malcolm Johnston and Harriet Stephens Johnston; two brothers, Richard Johnston and Paul Johnston; two sisters, Harriett Johnston and Vida Johnston Willis.

In the 1961 Bartlett Yancey High School yearbook, Julius Johnston, III, chose the following quote by Alexander Pope: “Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow”. He knew that an inner worth, integrity, virtues, and character were what made a person. He lived out those principles. His sacrifice continues to inspire generations of Americans.

Richard Johnston was asked to describe his brother in one word, he said a “gentleman” and that “I think of him every day.”



May Historical Facts

British nurse and public health activist Florence Nightingale was born in Florence, Italy. She volunteered to aid British troops in Turkey, where she helped to significantly reduce the death rate for wounded and sick soldiers by improving hospital sanitary conditions.

Florence Nightingale became acclaimed worldwide for her selfless devotion to nursing, her contributions to the development of modern nursing procedures, and for highlighting the dignity of nursing as a profession for women.

Read more on Historical May Events by clicking [HERE](#).

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Please be sure to renew your CCHA Membership for the year, if you have not. We appreciate your continued support of the organization that enables the Richmond-Miles Museum to continue to be open on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons.

With additional volunteers, we could be open additional days of the week. Please contact us if you might be interested in a four hour shift. Thank you!

[Renew Your CCHA Membership Here](#)



CCHA at the FARMERS MARKET

Caswell County Historical Association Board Members are often at the marketing assisting with the set up and take down as well as sharing details on the CCHA. Come and see us there!





The Caswell County Historical Association is in the process of working with the North Carolina Council of Museums in their FOCos program. This opportunity provides advice and guidance to small or emerging museums using the resources and expertise found in established museums around the state. We look forward to sharing more as we progress with the plans.



OTHER NEWS



FRESH. LOCAL. EVERY THURSDAY.

Caswell County
**FARMERS
MARKET**
Est. 2015

THURSDAYS
4-6:30pm
158 Church St.
Yanceyville Pavilion
CaswellLocalFoods.org

See you there!



For more details on the Market, click here to visit the website

CONCERTS & CRUZ IN

FIRST *Fridays*

JUNE 6

HEART & SOUL

JUNE 27 FIREWORKS

NEWLINA/NUSOUL

AUGUST 1

MATT BOSWELL

SEPTEMBER 5

DISITNGUISHED GENTLEMEN

OCTOBER 3

MCB BAND

DETAILS
YANCEYVILLENC.GOV

Come visit Yanceyville, NC on First Fridays May - October. Events feature a showcase of classic vehicles and a variety of music from regional bands. Enjoy our warm hospitality and small town community. Food for purchase.

Events begin at 7 pm.



158 E. CHURCH ST. YANCEYVILLE, NC 27379



Save the Date!

CASWELL COUNTY
*Farm
Tour*

NOV 8, 2025 • 9AM-4PM

Featured farms include:

BALDWIN BEEF
CENTURY FARM ORCHARDS
RAYNAY ALPACAS
SIMMONS FARM MUSEUM



**Vendors, gifts for sale, animal and orchard
tours, history lessons, special activities**

visitcaswell.com/events/caswell-farm-tour

CASWELL
Southwest Georgia's Gateway to the South

CENTRAL CASWELL COUNTY RURITAN

820 COUNTY HOME ROAD



FISH FRY

MAY 30TH 4 PM TO 7 PM

\$13.00 A PLATE

**INCLUDES: FISH, SLAW, POTATOES, DESSERT AND
DRINK**

**ALL PROCEEDS GO TO AMERICAN LEGION AND VFW FOR
RAMPS IN OUR COMMUNITY**

Caswell County Historical Association
THE OFFICIAL SITE OF THE CCHA & THE RICHMOND-MILES MUSEUM



**Membership
Drive
Now!**

See what is going on in the community
from a historical perspective.

All are welcome.

Annual Memberships - \$35

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Caswell County Historical Association
336-694-4965

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