

The Muse

Amherst County Museum & Historical Society

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Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

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April 2012

Home of Mr. & Mrs. Louis Tourgee to be on Tour in April

The home of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Tourgee will be open on April 22, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. sponsored by the Amherst County Museum and Historical Society. Mrs. Tourgee is also known by her business name, Mary Snow. This home has never been on tour before, and it is a delight.

About one and a half miles west of the Amherst Circle on Route 60, at 745 Lexington Turnpike, "Grand Oaks" was built about 1915 by the Turner family who resided there for many years. Situated on a hilltop, the house has beautiful views in every direction.

The Tourgees have added a wing onto the back of the house and have carefully preserved the original structure. It is artfully decorated throughout with many antiques and family keepsakes which Mary has collected through the years.

Museum members have free admission, and others will pay \$10 or join the Museum that day. Watch for signs, and enjoy this wonderful tour.



Future events:

- On **Sunday, May 20** at 2:00 pm *Endstation Theatre Company* will bring to the Museum a preview of its 2012 Summer Season. Artistic Director Geoff Kershner will introduce the cast of *Comedy of Errors* and director Chad Larabee will introduce his production of the musical *Big River*. Please join us in this opportunity to meet the 2012 *Endstation Company*.
- A program about the African-American schools in Amherst County, cosponsored by Amherst Glebe Arts Response (AGAR). This program is scheduled for 2 p.m., **Sunday, June 3**, and will also be at the Museum.

Coming Events

Sunday, April 22 from 2 to 4 p.m. Tour of Mr. & Mrs. Tourgee's home

Saturday, May 19 at 1 p.m. Bridge Party

Sunday, May 20 at 2 p.m. Presentation by theatrical group, *Endstation*

Sunday, June 3 at 2 p.m. AGAR program about African American schools in Amherst County

Saturday, June 9 from 7 a.m. till noon Yard Sale

Thank You!

Especially to those volunteers who have managed the Museum when the director is away or otherwise engaged:

*Steve Arthur
Midge Elliott
Bill Hathaway
Tom Wallace*



Above: Judy Faris, Program Chairman, and Faith Hofma, speaker, at the Museum on Sunday, March 18. Ms. Hofma presented an informative program about the Garland family. Of particular interest were her remarks about politics in Amherst County related to the Civil War. Samuel Meredith Garland was a prominent politician in Amherst County at that time.

Behind Mrs. Faris and Ms. Hofma one can see a part of a new addition to the Museum's collection of Civil War art. "Gray Cover for Gray Rifles" was donated by Richard Jeffries of Kentucky and shows the 19th Virginia Infantry, which drew heavily from Amherst County. The print is one of a limited edition of 1000 by Chris Collingwood.

Currently the Museum is exhibiting most of the Civil War prints in its collection, which includes works by Don Troiani, Alan Fearnley, Dale Gallon and Mort Kunstler. Also on exhibit are buttons, and bullets donated by Maj. William Brown.

Civil War trivia: On July 26, 1861, *The [Richmond] Daily Dispatch* published the news of Lt. Valentine Rucker's death at Manassas. Yet in December of 1862, he was arrested for the murder of William Dearing. He was found not guilty, but Lynchburg newspaper accounts did not provide particulars. Rucker died in 1900.

*The Muse, April 2012
Page 2*



In honor of Mrs. Dorothy Harvey's 100th Birthday!

*Bethany United Methodist Women
Margie Coleman
Mary Frances Olinger
Stephen Seymour
Leona Wilkins*

In Memoriam: Jan Osinga Ieka Osinga Scully

Welcome to our new members! Sandra Garland, VA



Above: Meikiu Lo, Technician, and Laura Drake Davis, Archivist, came to the Amherst County Museum to scan Civil War related documents as part of the Legacy Project for the Virginia Civil War Commission. The project is sponsored by the Library of Virginia and visits localities all over the Commonwealth.

Springtime: Sheep in Amherst County

The advent of spring brings visions of baby chicks and lambs gamboling about the fields. One would be hard put to find sheep in Amherst County today, but in the 1880s there were some in Amherst County who did engage in the raising of sheep.

In 1881, Virginia's Commissioner of Agriculture, Thomas Pollard, sent a letter to farmers all over Virginia, inquiring about their interests and experiences with raising sheep. He included thirteen questions which he asked to be specifically addressed. He received two responses from Amherst County—one from L. Minor (near the Pedlar River) and one from S.B. Walker on the James River. Today sheep raising in Amherst County is nearly non-existent except for lambs raised for 4-H projects. What follows are the texts of Commissioner's letter and the letters of L. Minor and S.B. Walker on raising sheep in Amherst County in the 1880s. — Holly Mills

Circular No. 20.

Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of Agriculture,
Richmond, 1881

My Dear Sir:

Will you be so kind as to give me your views in regard to the different breeds of sheep, and the best mode of breeding and general management stating---

1st. What breeds and crosses you prefer; what breeds are you keeping now, and have kept, with their merits and demerits:

2d. At what age should the ewe take the buck, at what age should the buck be permitted to serve ewes, and at what time of the year should they go together?

3d. What breeds do you prefer for mutton, for wool, and for lambs:

4th. What is the size of your flock, what crosses have you made, and what has been the improvement in the weight and quality of wool and carcass?

5th. What are your annual sales of wool, mutton, and lambs, prices obtained, and profits of investment on each?

6th. What is the character of your pasture lands, and what grasses do you prefer for sheep? How do you feed in the winter?

7th. What are your arrangements for shelter and protection in winter, and your system of winter feeding and treatment?

8th. Do you separate the *combing* from the *short* wool? What is the proportion of each, and what prices do you get for each kind? Also, prices for washed and

unwashed wool?

9th. Are there any woolen factories in your county? If yes, how many, and where located?

10th. When and where do you sell your wool, lambs, and mutton: How are they sent to market, and at what cost?

11th. Please state all you know about the diseases of sheep, and the remedies.

12th. Do you raise turnips or other roots for your sheep?

13th. Have you suffered from dogs among your flocks.

Do you keep "Shepherd dogs" or use any means to protect your sheep? What do you estimate the loss for your county from dogs in number and value of sheep to be?

Please reply as early as possible, and oblige,

Yours, very respectfully,

Thos. Pollard

Commissioner of Agriculture

I wish to use the information thus obtained for a work, "Sheep-Husbandry for Virginia," I am now preparing.

Responses from Amherst County include the following:

Pedlar Mills, Amherst CO., 21 July, 1881

Dr. Thomas Pollard:

Sir—I feel particular interest in the subject of sheep breeding now, being about to engage in the business quite extensively for so small a farmer; and though having been engaged in it for these 50 years, I feel that I am still a tyro*. So, all that I say in regard to the matter, you, of course, will take "cum grano salis."

1st. I should prefer Cotswold with ¼ Merino—because of the wool—the former being deficient in this regard.

2d. At 12 months. The buck should be at least 12 months old.

3d. As we keep them in this section for both wool and mutton, and can have reference to neither exclusively in the profit, therefore the combination as above indicated.

4th and 5th. Not answered, because too trifling to be noted.

6th. We are using clover and orchard grass at present, hoping, however, to get blue grass to take after a while. We feed on oats entirely.

7th. No protection for them. The sheep graze almost entirely, except in bitter weather, when they are fed, as I said, on sheaf oats.

8th. We make no separation of the wool. Get from 33 to 44 cents for it washed; 25 to 30 unwashed.

*tyro—a beginner, a novice

9th. There are no woolen factories in the county. I hope to see one established at "Pedlar Mills." I have been urging it, but I think funds are needed.

10th. We sell our lambs and wool at Lynchburg, where we get \$2.50 and \$3.00 for the former, and, as I said above, from 33 to 44 cents for the latter.

11th. No experience in the diseases of sheep. That is to be avoided only by suffering but small flocks to run together, say 30 to 40, and changing the range frequently.

12th. Answered above.

13th. We have not recently; but in 20 years have had them killed out and scattered entirely twice. Can form no estimate of the loss from dogs in the county, because there are very few flocks in it.

Remarks.—Having my farm divided into five 30 acre-fields, I would have 150 sheep divided into 3 flocks. I would have this small number, because I would consider one well kept would yield more profit than three badly kept, for according to the keep is the size of the fleece. I would have the buck put with the ewes 1st of November, so that the lambs would come in March, thereby getting the benefit of the grass. I would have the male lambs trimmed as soon as they fall, before they can get out of your way, because of the very superior growth. With the mother kept in good plight till weaning time, they will be as large under this process in the month of May or first of June as if the lamb had come at Christmas. I would have at least 20 or 30 of these wethers, out of a flock of 150, to sell each year, which would bring at least \$8 or \$10. Old Dr. Morris of the "Green Springs" used to sell his, and the butchers would go for them at the latter price, \$10. I have known him to shear 12 and 14 pounds of wool from these wethers. Such sheep under such a process, I am convinced, must yield more profit, especially under the present system of labor, than the best tobacco at the highest prices. I would attempt to make no grain more than would suffice to keep the stock up. I am well persuaded that the vast importation of wool into the United States will be avoided, and that we shall soon become exporters of the article, if the attention of our people could be turned to its production—i.e., if they would be judicious in their selections and crosses, getting such a combination of breeds as would produce most mutton, and at the same time most wool.

If these crude observations should be of the least service in the preparation of the work you have in hand, I shall be much satisfied, and consider myself as fully compensated for the time spent in the writing.

With very sincere regards, I am your obedient servant,
L. Minor

Edge Hill, VA., June 22, 1881

Dr. T. Pollard,
Commissioner Agriculture:

Dear Sir,—Your Circular No. 20, in regard to sheep, is to hand. Owing to the poor protection given by our Legislature I have been afraid to venture any outlay in sheep further than to raise a few for table and to afford wool for family use. I believe them to be the most profitable stock we have if protected against the rogues and half-starved curs.

1st. I only keep from 15 to 50 head, a cross of Southdown and Cotswold. I would prefer South down to all others, but they are too hairy on the back part of leg and sometimes get lousy there. If crossed up the Leicester with a view to get the clean leg, with the easy keep and thrift of Southdown, both breeds would be improved.

2d. Have never experienced—usually allowing their own way.

3d. Southdown for mutton; Cotswold for wool and lambs.

4th. As low as 15 and high as 50; Southdown and Cotswold; but little improvement.

5th. Twenty-five to 30 cents for wool; \$2.50 to \$3 for lambs; but we sell very few; eat the lambs, and trade wool for labor, &c.

6th. High and rolling; native grasses, with clover.

7th. I usually shelter at night, and give a little shelled corn night and morning during winter. My shelter is an open shed, but I believe they do better with access to a pine thicket and no other shelter, if fed a little corn along the ground.

8th. Never separate the wool; washed wool about 5 to 10 cents higher than unwashed.

9th. No.

10th. Lynchburg, in April and May; cost of transportation, 20 cents for lambs, and 10 cents per hundred for wool.

11th. Comparatively nothing.

12th. To a very limited extent.

13th. Have not suffered from Dogs so far, which I attribute to bells and frequent housing or penning with cows, but am in continual dread. Do not keep shepherd dogs. Any estimate of loss for county would be guess work, as I go about but little and have no data. In the census report, which I took for this district, I found but very few sheep kept—not 5 when there should be 1,000. The few who have ventured have lost so heavily by dogs that the many are deterred. Money must be abundant before one would venture \$50 for an improved ram, and \$10 to \$25 each for ewes, probably to have all in one night killed.

Very respectfully yours,
S.B. Walker



Clarence Williams donated a scan of a patch for CCC Co. 2356, it is about 5 inches in diameter (brief research shows this to be the camp at today's Amherst Wayside)



At left, a photo of Dorothy Wood, who married Buddy Schirmacher, one of a number of photos from a photo album donated by Bill McLean. Digitization by Sweet Briar intern, Sarah Allen.

amherstcountymuseum.org/collections/2012-09.html is the link for a newly received collection of digital scans from a scrapbook kept by Emma Eubank Ellis Saunders of Nebraska. She spent her high school years with her Aunt Mary Ellis in Amherst. This delightful scrapbook, donated by Charles Strickland, is a wealth of information about the doings of young people in Amherst in the years 1911 to 1913. She writes and photographs a number of events, including friends with the Scott, Whitehead Garland, Pfister, and Ellis families.

Below is a photo from Emma's scrapbook, depicting the early foundation for the new Amherst High School



More scrapbooks and postcards will soon be available on our website, so be sure to check it out !



Check out what's new
in the Museum's Gift Shop!



The Mission of the Amherst County Museum & Historical Society is to discover, collect and preserve objects related to the history and genealogy of Amherst County. The Museum & Historical Society shall exhibit, interpret and offer those collections to provide educational experiences for people of all ages.

Memberships are annual from September to September; for details, see www.amherstcountymuseum.org/membership.html

Special Contributions

- Friend \$25 to \$49
- Donor \$50 to \$99
- Patron \$100 to \$499
- Sponsor \$500 to \$999
- Benefactor \$1000 and up

If you would like your donation to go to a certain purpose, please check one of the funds below.

Categories for Donations

- Operating Fund _____
- Endowment Fund _____
- Building Fund _____

GardenFest

The Amherst Village Garden Club will hold its annual GardenFest on the grounds of the Amherst County Museum & Historical Society on Saturday, April 28, 2012. This is a rain or shine event and will be held from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

This will include a huge plant sale, bake sale, gardening advice from professionals, children's activities and a garden-related boutique. Please join us!



Above, items to be found at the Village Garden Club's popular GardenFest.

Bridge Party coming in May

On Saturday, May 19, the Museum will sponsor a bridge party. Playing will begin at 1 p.m. There will be a fee of \$10 per player to enter, and there will be refreshments for all. This is a fun way to support the Museum and have a good time with friends as well!

Yard Sale in June

The Museum's annual Yard Sale will be on Saturday, June 9. We welcome lightly used kitchen items, decorative pieces, linens, artwork, bric-or-brac, etc; no clothes, please. Baked items will also be welcome. Bring your items during the week of June 5. The Museum has been working hard to complete the Hamble Center and community support with this project will go a long way!



Above, the jewelry table is a favorite place at the Yard Sale.

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Amherst County Museum & Historical Society

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