

The



Muse

Amherst County Museum & Historical Society

staff@amherstcountymuseum.org

www.amherstcountymuseum.org

(434) 946-9068

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

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 2

April 2013

2013 Annual Meeting Saturday, April 27 at 4 p.m.

Former Museum Director Tom Mackie will present a collage of anecdotes and pictures of batteau history and stories of the Batteau Festival's early years. Professor Mackie is now Director of the Abraham Lincoln Museum at Lincoln Memorial University and has continued his study of river transport since his introduction to batteaux in Amherst County in the 1980s.



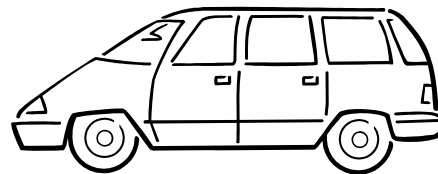
The program will be followed by a barbecue supper (barbecue, cole slaw, corn on the cob and baked beans) with a beer/wine cash bar, and music by *Country Proud* (bluegrass) and *Rough Around the Edges* (older rock).

Admission is \$15 per person and is not limited to Museum members (invite your friends to become members!). Make your reservations and payment by April 20. This event will be great fun for all, so make your plans early!



Van Tour, Saturday, May 25, at 9 a.m.

The Museum will sponsor a van tour following Drive #3 from the recent book, *Sunday Drives*, written by Ann Rucker and Margaret Myers. The approximately 3 1/2 hour tour will begin at the Museum at 9:00 and will include stops at Brightwells Mill, Galts Mill and Edge Hill. Each van will have a tour guide to provide information along the route. Extensive research has been done to make the tour interesting and informative.



Call the Museum at (434) 946-9068 by May 17 to make reservations.

The Museum can now accept
donations online

Just click on the *Donate* button on our homepage

www.amherstcountymuseum.org

Holiday Vacation & Museum Closings

Closed Saturday, May 25 for Memorial Day weekend.

In July, the Museum will close for the week of July 4.

Saturday, April 27, at 4 p.m. — Annual Meeting: Batteaux, barbecue and bands \$15 per person (reservations by April 20)

Saturday, May 25, at 9 a.m. — Van Tour—Sunday Drives #3 — Reservations by May 17.

Thank you!

Patrons

*Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga
Jay & Jennifer Mills Fund*

Margaret Cooper, VA

Mr. and Mrs. Holcomb Nixon, VA

Donors

Mr. and Mrs. Frank T. Burks, VA

Welcome to our New Members!

*Mike Burns, NM
Heather Cooper, VA
Lillian Elizabeth Ford, VA*

From the Archives

Sweet Briar student Roberta Desiderio has been processing and digitizing the Fletcher postcard collection donated by Rebecca Jones in 2011. Previously started by board member Judy Faris and junior volunteer Madison Harpham, Roberta is now preparing and coding the collection for posting on our website. These images will be available from the *Archives and Collections* link on our *Library* page. Most of the cards are addressed to Betty Fletcher of Madison Heights and date from 1910 to the 1940s. They tell stories of daily life, visiting friends and family, planning parties and picnics and more. Some of these postcards you may have already seen in our newsletters—the collection is a wealth of cards for special occasions—in the last newsletter a St. Patrick's Day card from the collection was featured, and many are already on exhibit in the Museum's main hallway.

At right, the Sweet Briar station, from the Cash Collection.



Need a place for your family reunion?

The Museum's Hamble Center

...is now available for your event! Conveniently situated in downtown Amherst, this building can be rented for special events. The Hamble Center has a kitchen, two restrooms, plenty of tables and chairs and now has heating and air conditioning. If your family reunion is scheduled for the Museum's public hours, the family historians can do some of their research in the same trip! Call the Museum at (434) 946-9068 for more details.

About the Cash Glass Plate Negatives

Professor Siobhan Byrns will present a lecture, "Frank Cash's Glass Negatives: Images of Amherst, Sweet Briar, Monroe and Lynchburg City 1890-1910." at Lynchburg College on Monday, **April 15** at 4 p.m. in Schewel 231. The lecture is sponsored by the Office of Academic Affairs and members of the Lynchburg College Faculty Selection Series: Deanna Cash, Lorna Dawson, Lesley Friedman, Kim McCabe, Laura Long, Kevin Peterson, Ed Polloway, Sally Salden and Julius Sigler, with coordination by Brian Crim and Elza Tiner.

This lecture is a just the prelude to the exhibit opening in July at the Academy of Fine Arts. Our June newsletter will have more details of the exhibit.

Some notes on the Death of Indiana Fletcher Williams

Mrs. Indiana Fletcher Williams, who died Monday [October 29, 1900] at her home, Sweetbrier, in Amherst county, was probably the wealthiest woman in the section of the State, her fortune being estimated at \$500,000. She was a daughter of Elijah Fletcher, at one time owner and editor of the Lynchburg Virginian. From the Alexandria Gazette, October 30, 1900.

The will of Indiana Fletcher Williams is likely the most well-known in Amherst County's history. This was the legal instrument by which Amherst County would become the home for a prestigious institute of higher education for women—Sweet Briar College. The will was read in November, 1900, and several publications still exist that refer to November, 1900, as the time of her death. (In 1925, the president of the board of directors referred to it when Dr. Meta Glass was inaugurated president of Sweet Briar College; also in *The First Year Book of Sweet Briar Institute, 1906-1907*; the November 21, 1900, issue of the *Lexington Gazette* states that she died on October 30, still not quite correct, but a bit closer to accurate).

There are been much speculation about Mrs. Williams' will. She was well educated herself and education was a significant aspect of her family's values. Her husband, Rev. J. Henry Williams, was a Phi Beta Kappa from Hartford College in Connecticut (where he also took a master's degree), before studying for ministry at General Theological Seminary, New York. Martha Lou Lemmon Stohlman speculated that the idea for Sweet Briar to become an educational institution may have originated with Henry (see page 38, *The Story of Sweet Briar College*).

In February, 1901, the *Alexandria Gazette* reported the following:

Mrs. William's Estate—The litigation over the three-quarters of a million dollars left by the late Mrs. Indiana Williams has been compromised before a legislative committee. Mrs. Williams, who died some months ago in Amherst county, left about \$700,000 to establish the Sweet Briar School for Girls. A male member of the family contested the will and had begun proceedings in court to set it aside. A few days ago a bill was presented in the Virginia Senate to charter the institution. It was op-

posed by the contestant of the will as well as by the county of Amherst, to which the Williams estate owed \$50,000 in back taxes. The bill came up yesterday [February 8, 1901] evening before the committee on public institutions and the compromise was effected. Under the terms of this the estate of the rich widow is to give the male member of the family who is fighting the will \$25,000. This is to be a consideration for his abandoning all further litigations or claims upon the property. Another consideration of the agreement is that the estate is to pay the county of Amherst \$30,000 due on account of back taxes. The Sweet Briar School is the one to which Mrs. Van Rensselaar, of New York, is expected to make a large donation, which, it is said, will carry the endowment of that institution up to an amount which will exceed that of any similar one in the country.

Sweet Briar never did hear from Mrs. Van Rensselaar. Nevertheless, on February 13, 1901, Sweet Briar Institute was chartered by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Today, it still stands as a remarkable memorial to the Williams' only daughter, Daisy, who died in 1884 at the tender age of sixteen.

Below, inset from the "Daisy Window" at Ascension Church depicts a harp, which Daisy loved to play.



STATE ADDS 13 HISTORIC SITES TO THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER

From Press Release, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

—New listings cover sites in the counties of Amherst, Bath, Giles, Loudoun, Mathews, Montgomery, Nottoway, Pittsylvania, Rappahannock, Sussex, and Washington, and the cities of Alexandria and Winchester—

In particular...



Dulwich Manor in **Amherst County** was constructed in 1909 as a summer house for Norfolk real estate mogul Herman Lawrence Page. The Neoclassical mansion is one of the largest and most ornate houses constructed in the county during the first half of the 20th century. Used for recreation and entertainment by the Page family for more than four decades, the house boasts large and open public spaces on the first floor.

This listing, among others, will be forwarded to the National Park Service for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Listing a property in the state or national register places no restrictions on what a property owner may do with his or her property.

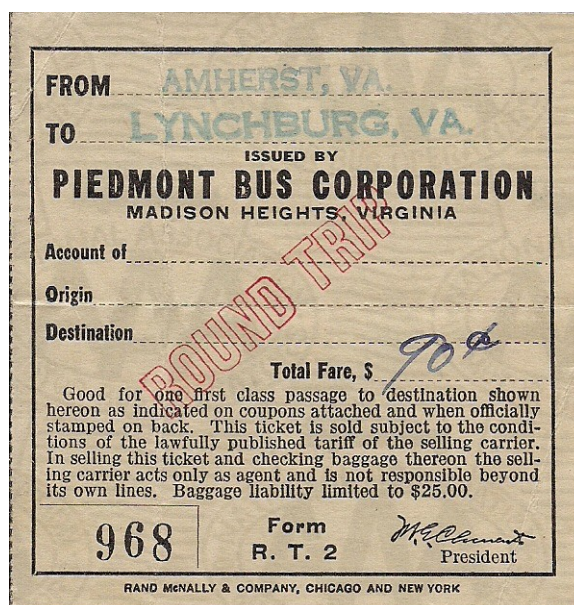
Designating a property to the state or national registers—either individually or as a contributing building in a historic district—provides an owner the opportunity to pursue historic rehabilitation tax credit improvements to the building. Such tax credit projects must comply with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Virginia is a national leader among states in listing historic sites and districts in the National Register of Historic Places. The state is also a national leader for the number of federal tax credit rehabilitation projects proposed and completed each year.

Together the register and tax credit rehabilitation programs have played significant roles in promoting the conservation of the Commonwealth's historic places and in spurring economic revitalization and tourism in many towns and communities.

Photographs and the nomination form for each of these properties can be accessed on the DHR website here: <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/boardPage.html>.

Does this look familiar?



This 1932 round trip ticket stub is also pictured on page 98 of *The Town of Amherst: Celebrating 100 Years*, compiled by Museum board members Leona Wilkins, Mary Frances Olinger and Betty Glass, described on the next page. Ruth McBride has donated a number of items to the Museum which were used in illustrating this book. Details for ordering this book, or any others in our book shop, can be found on our website by clicking on the *Giftshop* link at the top of the webpage.

In the Shadow of Tobacco Row Mountain

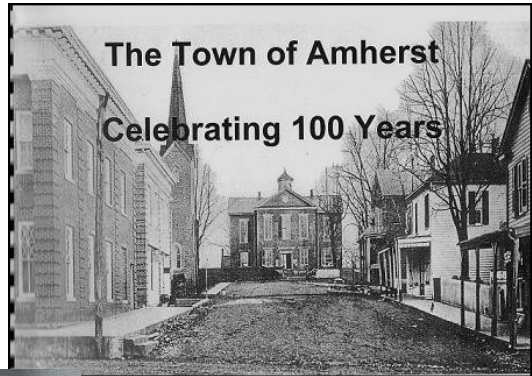


Elon, Monroe, and Other Villages

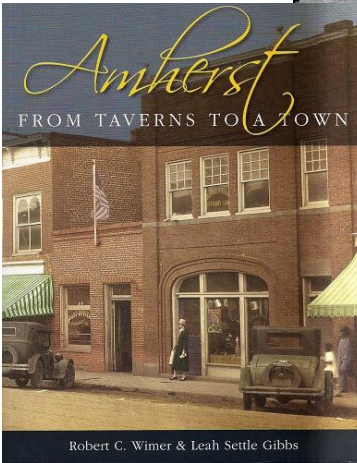
FLORENCE FOSTER NIXON

In the Shadow of Tobacco Row Mountain, by Florence Foster Nixon, comprises more than thirty years of research about the people and places in the vicinity of Elon, Virginia, and showcases more than five hundred photos collected from albums and attics. Other villages included are: Agricola, Allwood, Bethel/Salt Creek, Burford, Naola, Peach, Pedlar Mills, Pera, Pleasant View, Snowden and Waugh's Ferry. Index included. \$25

The Town of Amherst: Celebrating 100 Years, compiled by Museum board members Leona Wilkins, Mary Frances Olinger and Betty Glass, this volume is a pictorial treasury of the town's people and places, gathered together as a celebration of the town's 100th birthday! An absolute must for any collector of Amherstiana! \$17.15



Amherst: From Taverns to a Town, about the Town of Amherst by journalist Robert C. Wimer and Leah Settle Gibbs, an Amherst native with a wealth of knowledge and talent for writing. This volume includes full length versions of articles written for the Town's centennial year, 2010, and much more. Contributing authors include Patty Walton Turpin, Thurman B. Davis, James D. Settle and others. Photos, timelines, maps, index. Published by Blackwell Press, Lynchburg, Virginia. Hardback \$30; paperback \$20.



To order any of these, mail a check to:

Amherst County Museum
P.O. Box 741
Amherst, VA 24521

Postage and handling is \$4 for the first book; \$1 for each additional book. Virginia residents add 5% sales tax.



New in the Museum's Gift Shop!

SUNDAY DRIVES

\$20 plus \$4 postage & handling (Va residents add \$1 tax)



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	_____

If you haven't already heard, a non-profit historical project, *The War of 1812 Preserve the Pension Project*, seeks to conserve, preserve, and publish the unique War of 1812 pensions. The War of 1812 Pension and Bounty Land Files housed in the National Archives in Washington, D.C., are being digitized and placed online indefinitely; easily available to lineage society members, researchers and others for FREE! You can find out more about the project at <http://go.fold3.com/1812pensions/> To search the pension files that have been digitized so far, go to <http://go.fold3.com/1812pensions/>

Tidbits from Yesteryear

April 24, 1954: The old **Central Hotel** in Main Street in the town of Amherst was auctioned. The building was owned by Wade. H. Ward, auctioned by Hopkins Brothers, auctioneers of Lynchburg. It was purchased by W.M. Drummond to be razed and build a grocery store. (Amherst New Era-Progress, April 15 and April 29, 1954)

April 29, 1775: Thomas Jefferson describes "**Rucker's Battoe**" in his notes. He described it as fifty feet long, four feet wide at the bottom and six feet wide at the top. It drew only thirteen inches of water when loaded with eleven hogsheads of tobacco.

Mark your Calendars!

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July, 2013, Frank Cash's Glass Negatives: Images of Amherst, Sweet Briar, Monroe and Lynchburg, 1890-1910, at Lynchburg's Academy of Fine Art.

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