

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.

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August 2010

Annual Membership Meeting

Our Annual Meeting will be the occasion for a presentation about the Reverend Robert Rose, given by Mr. Will Mays (see at right) at Winton Country Club on Saturday, September 25, 2010.

Our meeting will begin at 11:30 a.m. with a buffet at noon, followed by the presentation.

Please join us for this event! **Remember 11:30 a.m. at Winton Country Club on September 25, 2010.** Make reservations by calling the Museum, 946-9068, by Saturday, September 18. Cost is \$12 which includes meal, tax, tip and entertainment.

About Rev. Robert Rose:

Robert Rose was born in Scotland in 1704 and after his ordination came to Virginia in 1724 first at Spotswood's *Germanna*, and then in Essex County. In 1744 he became the first minister to serve St. Anne's Parish, formed in 1744, comprising present day Albemarle, Nelson and Amherst counties. Join us on Sept. 25 to find out more!

The Amherst County Museum
and
Historical Society

Cordially invites you to
a presentation on the life of

Reverend Robert Rose (1704-1751)

presented by *William N. Mays*

at the *Annual Meeting*
on Saturday, September 25, 2010
at 11:30 a.m.

Winton Country Club
Clifford, Virginia

Lunch - \$12

RSVP by September 18

by calling 946-9068 or email

staff@amherstcountymuseum.org

To join the Museum

Regular \$20

Senior: \$15

Household \$25

William N. Mays was born and raised on a farm near Clifford and graduated from Amherst High School and the University of Virginia.

Employed by The Peoples National Bank and Trust Company of Lynchburg (now Bank of America), he retired after thirty-three years to become the director of planned giving for Virginia Baptist Hospital for four years. He then became co-owner of The Pettyjohn Company, an investment advisory firm. He retired from the firm in 2005, after seventeen years.

He served on the Board of Supervisors in Amherst County from 1964 through 1967, serving as Chairman in 1967.

Currently he serves on the boards of Centra Health Foundation, Westminster-Canterbury of Lynchburg and Winton Country Club. In the past he has been a Board member of United Way, Virginia

Episcopal School, Amazement Square, Amherst County Chamber of Commerce and Lynchburg Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Mays enjoys reading biographies and has given several presentations on the life of Reverend Robert Rose.

**Annual Meeting reservations due by September 18. Call 936-9068
Van Tour October 23, details on page 2**

Van Tour

We're planning a van tour for Saturday, October 23. Mark your calendar! We will go to areas west of Amherst such as Allwood, Pera, Pleasant View, Pedlar Mills, Ottie Cline's Monument, and Elon. Plans are in progress. We will leave the Amherst County Administration Building **promptly** at 9:00 a.m. and return in early afternoon. Bring your lunch. Call the Museum at 946-9068 to reserve your space. This is a great chance to see rural areas and historic places.

Yard Sale Fundraiser

We will sell from the Annex on the first Saturday that is cool enough—perhaps as early as Saturday, September 18. Please bring items by September 17. Advertisement will be on our lawn sign.

Amherst County's 250th Anniversary

Get ready to celebrate the county's sesquicentennial! Interesting activities are being planned at the Museum, so stay in touch!

October is Virginia Archaeology Month

Dr. Lynn Rainville of Sweet Briar's Tusculum Institute, will present a program October 9. She will talk about the meaning of certain symbols, drawing from examples in Amherst cemeteries, and summarize the history of cemetery development from the 1700s to the present, focusing on cemeteries in Amherst County.



Welcome to our new members!

Scott Baldwin, *Pamplin, VA*
Steve Cox, *Amherst, VA*
Terri Spencer, *Alexandria, VA*
Dr. and Mrs. Mack Sutherland, *Madison Heights, VA*
The Tourgee family, *Amherst, VA*

Committee Members Wanted

The Museum is looking for people to volunteer for positions on the following two committees:

- ***Publicity Committee*** – Duties include being responsible for newspaper articles promoting events and information about the museum in order to encourage public participation.
- ***Exhibit Committee*** – Duties include becoming familiar with the collections and aid in designing or creating new rotating exhibits on a seasonal basis.

Both committees will work in conjunction with the Museum Director and have flexible schedules. For more information please contact the Museum Director, Holly, at 434-946-9068.

Important Membership Note!

You recently received a letter regarding our membership changes. Please send your renewal by September 1.

This will enable more efficient bookkeeping at the Museum. Thanks!

Wanted: For the Museum

A copy of the *New Era-Progress* for July 22, 2010. Also, any issues from 2001, 2002 and 2003.

New in the Library

- *Twain, Clements Charts and Notes Relating to Mark Twain's possible Amherst County Connections*, two compilations by Ruby Leighton.
- *The Bear Mountain Indian Mission School: First of a series of DVDs of 3 Amherst Schools*, a project of Amherst Glebe Arts Response, Inc. (AGAR), 2010.
- *Three Amherst County Schools*, the DVD that contains the complete set of oral histories produced by AGAR.
- *Ancestral Spirits Awaken Me*, by Violet April (Shaya) Ebersole, 2006. The author tells the story of her research on the Boatwright and Pinn families.
- *Wright Family*, a series of resources by Robert N. Grant. New acquisitions include *Wright family land tax lists from Rockbridge County, 1782-1850; Personal property tax lists, 1782-1850*, and a third volume, *Birth records 1853-1896, marriage records 1777-1918, census records 1810-1900, deed records 1777-1902, death records 1853-1896, cemetery records, and probate records 1777-1909 in Rockbridge County, Virginia.*

Amherst County Early War Confederate Cavalry Uniform by Christopher D. Rucker, MD

In response to the firing on Fort Sumter, SC on April 12, 1861, and President Lincoln's subsequent call for 75,000 volunteers to suppress the Confederacy, Virginians united in favor of secession. The Amherst County court had already accepted a Virginia law to allow counties to raise and equip militia, and by its April term was recommending a bond issue to raise \$5,000 to arm volunteers. The Lynchburg newspaper, noting the formation of volunteer companies in surrounding counties, asked on April 20, "Will not Amherst and Appomattox furnish one hundred men each?" Mr. Thomas Whitehead was at the Amherst Courthouse two days later, recruiting men for a cavalry company.



one bought by Amherst County at the outbreak of hostilities. Examination of the photo suggests that the uniform is of gray wool, likely purchased from the Charlottesville Woolen Mills or at Staunton. Rucker's uniform was probably sewed by the lady patriots of Amherst County, a common practice in the early War years. The trousers and jacket appear to be of matching fabric. He is wearing a short-waisted shirt or jacket, tucked into the trousers, with a fold-down collar, over a shirt and cravat. The jacket is of the so-called "battle shirt" or "fireman's shirt" style, with a double-breasted bib front called a plastron, with two rows of four buttons, one missing on his left. There is tape trim up the middle of the plastron, and along its

At a May 2nd called meeting of county court, bonds were delivered to equip three companies of volunteers; \$2,000 was delivered to Thomas Whitehead for a cavalry company called "The Amherst Rangers." On May 22nd, an additional \$2,200 was appropriated for Whitehead's purchase of uniforms and equipment for the Rangers. The next day, the Virginia electorate approved the legislature's signing of the Ordinance of Secession, and William Ambrose Rucker went to war.

Rucker enlisted in Amherst May 23rd as a private, for one year, and was mustered in at Lynchburg May 29th, bringing his horse valued at \$175 and \$25 of equipment. The newspaper reported that The Amherst Mounted Rangers were uniformed and armed with double-barreled shotguns and revolvers. To the author's knowledge, Rucker's photograph shows the only known image of the early War uniform worn by the Amherst cavalry unit. By August 1, 1862, Rucker had furnished a substitute, George W. Dennison, to take his place in the ranks.

This dates his service and his uniform to the first fifteen months of the War, and strongly suggests that it was the

edges, and perhaps on the collar, as well.

Rucker's cheeks are rose-tinted by the colorist, but no other hue can be detected in the original image, although it was common for the tape trim to be colored on the battle shirts of other Confederate units. The style of the Amherst cavalry uniform is similar to that of other units in the neighboring counties, some of which show blue trim and plastrons. There is an unidentified piece of jewelry in the middle of Rucker's jacket, perhaps a fastening for a pocket watch. His belt is of black leather, and his holster hides a pistol with a round butt, perhaps an imported gun and likely a personal purchase brought from home. By the time that the early uniforms were wearing out and needing replacement, the Confederacy had established uniform standards, and the iconic battle shirts were seldom seen after the second year of the War.

The original image of William Ambrose Rucker, first published by The Rucker Family Society was part of a family collection of his brother, Daniel H. Rucker, and is now owned by Mr. Michael P. Rucker of Peoria, Illinois, who graciously allowed its publication here.

Amherst County Training School

On June 12, in conjunction with the Town of Amherst's 100th Birthday Street Fair and Parade, the Amherst County Museum hosted *Amherst Training School Remembered*, a program of video interviews and live stories about the Amherst County Training School produced by Amherst Glebe Arts Response, Inc. (AGAR)

The Training School operated as an all-Black school from 1921 until the 1969-70 school year, when integration finally took place for all public school students in Amherst County. The Training School educated students from first to eleventh grade, and was the first public high school for African-American students in Amherst County, Virginia.



AGAR also showed a video they had produced about the school using oral histories from teachers and students. Amherst native Mia Magruder was both videographer and editor of the video, which was narrated by Bob Langstaff. Project director was Lynn Kable.

At the Museum, moderator Lynn Rainville, Ph.D., facilitated a panel of former teachers and students in a lively discussion about their old school and how public education has changed. Former students on the panel were Hon . Willard Douglas, Jr. the first African-American fulltime judge in the Commonwealth of Virginia; Pastor Margaret Nelson, who before becoming a minister served as a full colonel in the US Air Force; Minister Jasper Fletcher, a former Amherst Magistrate; Gloria Higginbotham, a member of the Development



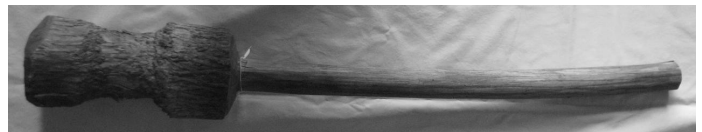
Photograph provided courtesy of Annie Chambers Pinn

*First row, left to right: Frances Cash, Rosetta Witt, Nadine Wheaton, Ella Clark, Nathaniel Anderson, Principal.
Second row: Minnie Sherrill, Louise Coles, Elynore White, and Annie C. Pinn*

Department at Sweet Briar College; Jean Higginbotham, a retired Amherst County Social Work Supervisor; and Robert Sandidge, a landscaper. Two teachers from the school also spoke: Annie Chambers Pinn, who taught high school, and Edith Jones, who taught the youngest children at the school. Amherst residents interviewed for the video but who were not present at the Museum to speak were former students Willie Diggs, Patricia and Gilbert Rose, Mabel Massie Hughes, and Bob Langstaff, whose WAMV Radio station operates in a building that was once part of Amherst Training School.

For more information call Lynn Kable at 434-989-3215 or write AGARVA@aol.com.

New Acquisition at the Museum



The wooden maul shown above, donated by William L. Hildebrandt of Amherst, appears to be fashioned from a single piece of wood. This typical tool was used in a variety of ways on the farm.

Thank You!

We continue to receive ongoing support from our members:

Sponsors

Kathryn Pixley

Patrons

Mr. and Mrs. Holcomb

Nixon

Alice Powell

Donors

Mazie Wilson

Sally Hanger Morowitz

Friends

Helen Massie

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Fell

Dorothy Harvey

Other donors: *Julie*

Warner, Mary Brugh

Memorial for Walter H.

Morse—*Alice Powell*

And More Thanks for a Great Yard Sale!

We had a lovely turnout for our Annual Yard Sale and great support from local businesses and private donors. Please help us continue to thank these sponsors with your business. They are:

Coleman Mays Building—Friend

Mr. I. Paul Wailes, III—Friend

The Bank of the James—Donor

The Rucker Agency—Donor

Frank T. and Lillian S. Burks—Donor

Dr. and Mrs. Mack Sutherland—

Donor

Amherst Milling

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Designs by Robin

Elkwood Salon

Estate Specialists

The Farm Basket
Food Lion
The Hair Gallery
Hill House Interiors
Interiors by Moyenne
Lou's Antiques
El Mariachi Restaurant
Blue Marlin Seafood Market
The More Corner
Rebec Vineyards
S'amanda's
Saunders Brothers
Spring Garden Gifts
Sweet Briar College Dining
Services
Travelers Restaurant
Vintage on Main
What A Blessing Bakery
Jane Unstead

Watch for more *thank you's* in our next newsletter!



The Perfect Gift!

The Town of Amherst: Celebrating 100 Years

Published by the Amherst County Museum and Historical Society

This book and many more available in our 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 beginning in September of each year.

Membership Category	
Regular (Individual)	\$20.00 _____
Regular (Household)	\$25.00 _____
Senior 55+ (Individual)	\$15.00 _____
Senior (Household)	\$20.00 _____
Student	\$10.00 _____
Business	\$100.00 _____

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 _____
 Conservation Fund _____
 Programs _____
 Technology Fund _____
 Annex Fund _____
 Library & Genealogy Resources _____

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone _____

In Amherst County

Thursday, September 2: Reception in Benedict Gallery at Sweet Briar, opening exhibit of artwork for the Town's Centennial Alphabet Book. Writer Susanne Wiggins Bunch will give remarks. 4: 30 to 6 p.m.

Saturday, September 18: Yard Sale II, weather permitting.

Saturday, September 25: The Annual Luncheon Meeting at Winton, \$12. Short business meeting at 11:30, lunch and program at noon

Saturday, October 9: Dr. Lynn Rainville of Sweet Briar's Tusculum Institute, will talk about historic cemeteries and the cemeteries in Amherst County. 1 p.m.

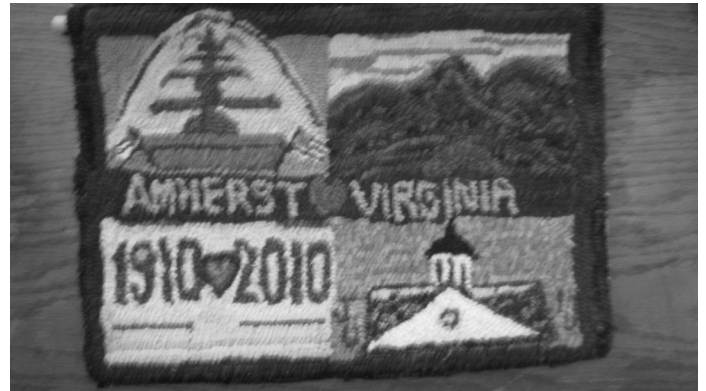
Saturday, October 24: Fall Van Tour leaves at 9 a.m. from the County Administration building.

Cookies and Cocoa at the Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 4, at the Museum.

Plan ahead to shop at Barnes and Noble on **Saturday, December 11.** Watch for more details on how this can benefit the Amherst County Museum!



Pat Wydner, left, won the lovely needlework created by Jane Unstead for the Amherst Town Centennial. Raffle tickets for the hanging were sold at the June Yard Sale.



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Amherst County Museum & Historical Society

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