

The



Muse

Amherst County Museum & Historical Society

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From the President

BREAKING NEWS—

It is not exactly a community barn raisin', but soon you will see a new structure going up at the back of the museum grounds.

Initially the building will be unimproved and used for storage of artifacts. As we obtain money, we will make improvements to the building and eventually will open a multipurpose exhibition hall.

This project has been a community effort. You, the members of the museum, have made this addition possible with all your volunteer hours at house tours, cake raffles and yard sales. We still have a ways to go so we will continue to need your time and services. We want to be the best little museum in Virginia.

Also, I extend my thanks to David Proffitt, county purchasing, and Jack Hobbs, Amherst town manager, for their assistance in this project.

See you at the Christmas reception!

Charles Hamble, Director

Winter Lecture!

The *Resurrecting Dearborn* exhibit was so popular and the demand for stories about old Dearborn was so great, that our Activities committee decided to line up a winter lecture on a related subject. Billy Wydner has agreed to speak about the Amherst Mill, and by extension, about mills in Amherst County generally. Be sure to mark your calendar for Friday, February 22, at 1 p.m. We'll look forward to seeing you here at the Museum! (*Snow date, February 29*)

A lecture about bateaux is also being lined up, but the date has not been set. Be sure to watch for details.

Christmas Open House

Wednesday, December 12, is the date for our Annual Open House at the Museum from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. We'll have musical entertainment by the Hazlett father-son duo and refreshments to enjoy while you visit with good friends. Remember to stop by!

Annual Holiday Open House

Wednesday, December 12

from 3 to 6 p.m.

at the Museum

Refreshments

Exhibits



Music

Decorations



What's new in the library:

- *Ancestors and Descendants of Nathaniel Davis Towler*, by Sharon Kay Towler Steo, 2007; includes photographs and images of original documentation.
- *Index to the Meade Cemetery, Madison Heights*, with thanks to Carolyn Moss-Rowland for providing updated information, and to Beverly Kryspin for the data entry.
- *The Bristol Registers of Servants Sent to Foreign Plantations, 1654-1686*, by Peter Wilson Coldham, 1988.

What's New in the Collections

The Museum recently acquired a collection of iron artifacts from the site of a blacksmith shop on High Peak Road. Donated by Doug Layne, this collection contains a variety of items, including a number of these mysterious objects! Can you tell us what they are?



Resurrecting Dearborn was a rousing success, many thanks to Nancy McDearmon and Marian Freerks. The



exhibited prompted the donation of several original flour and feed sacks. It is often thought that such sacks were a basic white with X's marked across the side, but in truth, these sacks clearly show otherwise! Don't you think so?

A Centennial is coming soon!

In the year 2010 the Town of Amherst will celebrate 100 years of incorporation. The museum, to commemorate this occasion, is working to compile a pictorial history of the town. A committee composed of Mary Frances Olinger, Betty Glass, and myself have begun visiting town residents and copying, with their permission, old photographs.

But we need your help, too! We are looking for old pictures of homes, businesses, churches, filling stations, and schools within the current town limits. Do you have a picture of your relatives standing in front of a building in Amherst? Does that building no longer exist or is greatly changed? That would be a great addition to the book. Did your church have a reunion 50 years ago or last year with the church in the picture? We would like to copy it. Does anyone remember the name of the Catholic church that stood on Main Street by the Char-Del, near the traffic circle? Knowing the name would help, having a picture would be even better.

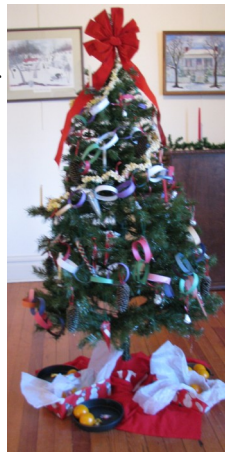
We can't promise to publish every picture; pictorial books are expensive, but we need pictures of our mayors. Also pictures of homes and business of any type that are long gone are especially important.

We want to celebrate Amherst as it is and remember the Amherst of the past.

—Lee Wilkins

Clio's Club

The *Cookies and Cocoa* party this year was a rousing success! Jointly sponsored each year with the Chamber of Commerce, this event has grown into one of the year's most popular family programs. What better way to start the holiday season with a party and parade? Winners of the Jamestown 2007 Amherst County fifth grade art contest were invited to join the Amherst Jamestown 2007 Steering Committee on its parade float, the Museum's children's committee planned a selection



of fun crafts for decorating their own tree, and the Chamber set up in the front yard and made sure everyone knew there was more fun inside. Popcorn was strung, paper cones were made for candy, cookies decorated and pinecones glittered!

Don't forget to save the date for the Vintage Valentines on Saturday, February 9 (*snow date: February 16*). Hands on crafts and refreshments will keep the younger set happy and creative. This is a delightful way for children to enjoy history!

***Fat Albert's ancestors
came from
Amherst and Nelson Counties.***

Well, that may be a stretch since Fat Albert was merely a cartoon character. However, the ancestors of Fat Albert's creator, William Henry Cosby, Jr., were from Amherst and Nelson counties.

Dr. Herbert L. Thornhill of New York provided the Amherst Museum with a genealogical study of the Cosby family by genealogist John Cerny. The Museum has worked with Dr. Thornhill in tracing his Thornhill, Lee and Linthicum family roots here in Amherst.

Without getting too tedious, William Cosby descends from Maria, a slave of John and Richard Cosby of Schuyler, Nelson County. Maria, born about 1797, had three known children, one of whom was Sam, born ca. 1821. Sam, in turn, had three or more children including a boy named Zachariah who was born on 17 January 1841.

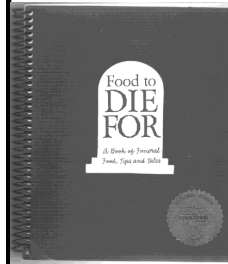
At Emancipation in 1865, Zack took the surname Cosby. He also took a wife, Louisa Daniel Johnson, and they had eighteen children. Louisa was one busy woman. They named the thirteenth child, born on 21 December 1881, Samuel Russell Cosby.

Sam, a merchant in Schuyler, somehow strayed south into Amherst County and met young Gertrude Thornhill. Gertrude was the comely daughter of William Ansel Thornhill and Zabria Linthicum, both of Amherst. We know not of the courtship, but Sam and Gertrude were married in Amherst on 12 June 1912 and lived in Nelson. They had one child, William Henry Cosby, on 9 March 1913, before moving to Philadelphia where five more children were born.

William grew up in Philly and married Anna Pearl Hite. Their first of four children, born 12 July 1937, was William Henry Cosby, Jr., better known as Bill Cosby, the comedian and television actor that we all know and enjoy. His role as creator of Fat Albert in itself earns him a place in hearts of humor, yet he did not stop there.

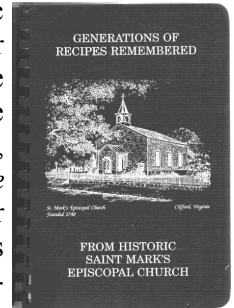
To complete the Amherst connection, the parents of William A. Thornhill were James and America Thornhill of Amherst County who were married before 1858. James and America were also the forebearers of Dr. Thornhill. The doctor's maternal great grandparents were Charles and Alice Lee who owned a farm on Turkey Mountain Road near Clifford. Many of Dr. Thornhill's kin still reside in Amherst and central Virginia.

Hearthstone History



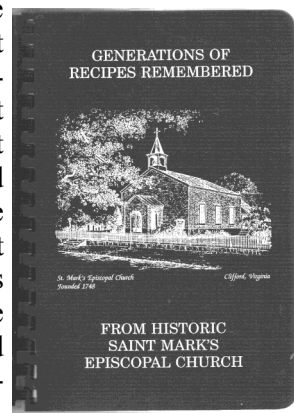
It never fails; cookbooks have always been popular sellers, and there is no better ways for local history to find its way into the home than through locally published cookbooks. At least one cookbook is headed for the Amherst County Jamestown 2007 time capsule. The newest bestseller in Amherst County is the Amherst Woman's Club cookbook, *All Around the Circle*, and it is a treasure trove of local history. Historical sketches include The Char-Del Restaurant and Travelers, not to mentions recipes from Rebec Vineyards and Winton.

Another popular cookbook sold at the Museum's gift shop is Monroe Methodist's *Railroad Cookery*, which includes a section on *The Wreck of the Old 97*. A number of Amherst County churches have produced their own cookbooks, all of them invariably including the ever-popular recipe for potato salad, each a little bit different depending on the church and whose recipe is most popular at their potluck suppers.



St. Mark's Church in Clifford has produced *Generations of Recipes Remembered*, which contains historical sketches of such Clifford landmarks as Geddes, The Brick House and Winton. Even across the James River in Lynchburg, the Old City Cemetery published *Food to*

Die For, another recent sensation in the bibliography of local culinary history. Returning to Amherst County, cookbooks have been produced by Amherst Presbyterian and Northminster in Madison Heights. At the Monacan Mission at Bear Mountain, one can find a Monacan cookbook at the Monacan Museum's gift shop. If your church has produced a cookbook the Museum would love to add it to our local culinary collection.



From the *Amherst New Era-Progress*, April 23, 1942

Masons Lay Cornerstone To New Building

A large crowd attended the laying of the cornerstone Monday afternoon of the new brick building recently erected by the Masons at Amherst, the upper floor of which is occupied as a lodge hall and the lower floor as a United States post office.



The Mason Lodge today is home to the Town police department and the Elkwood Salon.

The program was put on by Clinton Lodge No. 73, A.F. & A.M. of Amherst, and the most worshipful grand master of Virginia, Robert S. Barrett, was master of ceremonies.

Judge Edward Meeks, a member of the Amherst lodge, delivered the address. Masons from Lowesville and Mt. Pleasant lodges in Amherst County and from Appomattox attended. Judge Meeks served as marshall and the chaplain, Rev. George E. Powell, offered the prayer and pronounced the benediction.



*Bruce Ross
Flag bearer*

A union choir sang several hymns, closing with "America." Bruce Ross, representing the Boy Scouts, carried the United States flag.

Other Masons taking part were C.N. Younis, senior warden; Rowland Jones, junior warden; M.E. Robertson, treasurer; O.B. Ross, secretary; G.J. Dearborn, senior deacon; B.V. Burks and W.C. Dudley, stewards; S.L. A. Mays, past master with corn; J.R. Goodwin, W.H. Carter and L.H. Shrader, three master Masons with square, level and plumb; J.E. Bowman and L.P. Gregory, past masters with oil and wine; J.P. Cunning-



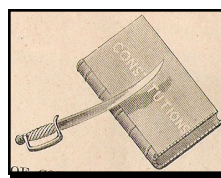
*Charles Younis
Senior warden*

ham, masters with Holy Bible; J.E. Boyd, W.R. Jones and John W. Shrader, past masters with lamps; and Wade H. Wood, tiler.



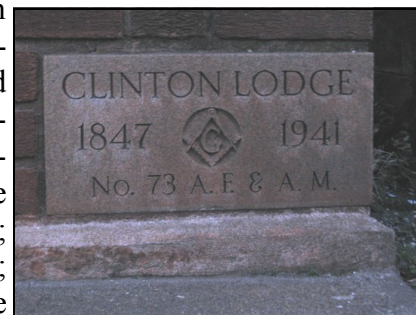
*O.B. Ross
Secretary*

Articles placed in the cornerstone were a copy of the *Amherst New Era-Progress* of April 16, 1942; list of names of 16 past masters who contributed to the cornerstone; list of 23 Masons and members of Masonic families, who purchased the building bonds; list of officers, trustees, Master Masons Fellowcraft and enter apprentice of Clinton Lodge No. 73



Constitution and tiler sword; image from Robert White's Masonic funeral manual

A.F. & A.M., as of this date; program of cornerstone ceremony with names of choir and other participants; silver and copper coins of the following denominations, saved by J.E. Bowman and John W. Shrader from the original cornerstone of the Methodist Church and Masonic Hall, which stood on the same site and was destroyed by fire in 1911; 10-cent Canadian coin, 1816; a silver emblem of 1830; a second Canadian, date not legible; United States one-cent piece, 1841; United States ten-cent piece, 1842; United States one-cent piece; 1850; United States ten-cent piece; 1853; United States 25-cent piece, 1853; United States one-cent piece, 1857; three silver coins in denominations of 50 cents, 25 cents and 10 cents of 1941; commemorating the year construction commenced on the building just completed; and snapshot pictures of Amherst County Fire Department No. 1, with fire truck in front of building; the Masonic building; and photographs of Judge Edward Meeks, John W. Shrader and O.B. Ross.



*"Clinton Lodge, 1847 - 1941"
Note the Masonic symbols
incised into the stone.*

**Winners
of the
Jamestown 2007 Amherst County Art Contest
for Fifth Graders**

Overall Winners: First place, XXXXXX, name of school;
second place: XXXXXX, name of school; third place:
XXXXXX, name of school.

Amherst Elementary: first place: XXXXXXX; second
place: XXXXXXX; third place: XXXXXXX

Elon Elementary: first place: XXXXXXX; second place:
XXXXXXX; third place: XXXXXXX

Pleasant View: first place: XXXXXXX; second place:
XXXXXXX; third place: XXXXXXX

Amelon Elementary: first place: XXXXXXX; second
place: XXXXXXX; third place: XXXXXXX

Madison Heights Elementary: first place: XXXXXXX;
second place: XXXXXXX; third place: XXXXXXX

In 1957, the phone number for the Wood house was Whitehall 6-3161. Service was provided by the Central Virginia Telephone Company. This is the building that today is the Amherst County Museum and Historical Society. If you haven't updated your personal directory lately, please note that our phone number is now 434.946.9068.

Ideas Wanted

Suggest some of your ideas for events we might sponsor at the Museum. We'd like to have programs you would enjoy!

Visiting Diginitary...

Lisa Hayes, in her role as Jane Eyre, delighted the Museum audience in October. The program was sponsored by Amherst Glebe Arts Response (AGAR), a non-profit devoted to the promotion of the arts. At right, AGAR board member Phyllis Shrader and Louise Cash meet Lisa/Jane after the program.



Consider sharing the gift of history and heritage!
You can use the form below to give someone special a gift membership!



Share Amherst's history and the Museum's special events for members only. Invite your friends to become members of the Amherst County Museum and Historical Society. All memberships are annual.

Membership Category	
Regular (Individual)	\$15.00 _____
Regular (Household)	\$20.00 _____
Senior 55+ (Individual)	\$10.00 _____
Senior (Household)	\$15.00 _____
Student	\$5.00 _____
Business	\$100.00 _____

Special Contributions		
Friend		\$25 to \$50
Donor		\$50 to \$100
Patron		\$100 to \$500
Sponsor		\$500 to 1000
Benefactor		\$1000 and up

Categories for Donations

- Operating Fund _____
- Endowment Fund _____
- Annex Fund _____
- Roof Fund _____
- Collections Conservation _____
- Programs _____
- Library & Genealogy Resources _____

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone _____

Gift Suggestions from the Museum Gift Shop

For the cooks: *All Around the Circle*, by the Amherst Woman's Club; also, *Railroad Cookbook*, from the Monroe United Methodist Church.

For the Civil War buffs: *Amherst Men in Gray*, by Robert Faught, USMC, Ret.; or *Destination Clifford*, by Dan Drury.

For the sports enthusiasts: *The Upper James River Atlas*, published by the Virginia Canals and Navigation Society.

For the collector: Amherst miniatures, the more recent additions to the collection being the Welcome to Amherst County sign and the tasting house at Rebec Vineyards.

For the children: assorted activity books from Dover Publications, crayons, and the boys' favorite railroad print.

For readers of local novels: Carolyn Tyree Feagans' newest book, *There is a Season*, has a distinctively Madison Heights flavor.

For the serious genealogist: Hardesty's *Amherst County Families and History*; Alfred Percy's *Amherst County Story* and *Gravestone Inscriptions of Amherst County*.

For the Sweet Briar student: Ann Whitley's series on the history of Sweet Briar.

Still don't know? A Museum gift membership covers everything!

Historical Happenings in Amherst County

Tuesday, December 11 — Jamestown 2007 Time Capsule encasement at the Amherst Library at 4 p.m.

Wednesday, December 12 — Annual Holiday Open House from 3 to 6 p.m. Join us for food, fun, music and opportunities to reminisce with friends about those old fashioned Christmases!

Historical Happenings Elsewhere

Sunday, December 9 — Nelson County Historical Society Holiday Open House at Oakland on Route 29 south of Lovingston. 2 - 5 p.m.

Saturday, December 8 - South Central Virginia Genealogical Society Open House and Annual Business Meeting. 1:30 p.m. at the Charlotte County Library on Route 57 (112 LeGrande Ave in Charlotte Court House. www.rootsweb.com/~vascvgs/

Holiday Hours for the Holidays

The Amherst County Museum will close on Friday, December 21 at 5 p.m. for the Christmas holiday and re-open on Wednesday, December 26. At New Years, the Museum will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, December 28 and re-open on Wednesday, January 2.

Executive Board:
Charles Hamble, President
Leona Wilkins, Vice-President
Betty Glass, Secretary
Mary Frances Olinger, Treasurer
Martha Cox
Cynthia Hicks
Ed Hopkins
Steve Martin
Susan Mays
Holcomb Nixon
Kathryn Pixley
Ann Whitley, ex-officio
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