

# The Muse

## Amherst County Museum & Historical Society

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www.amherstcountymuseum.org

(434) 946-9068

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

VOLUME 35, NUMBER 5

December 2010

### WINTER EXHIBIT

**Dolls, dolls, and more dolls** are on exhibit for the winter holidays at the Museum. Jane Peters, a local doll creator and historian, has loaned many of her “characters” for us to enjoy. Father Christmas is dressed in green velvet, and a Christmas lady is in red velvet; both are trimmed with fur. Very Christmassy!

There are dolls from foreign lands, brides all in white, Indians in beaded outfits, cuddly babies and more - all made and painstakingly dressed by Jane. The details are exquisite. Many have won awards in statewide competitions of doll hobbyists. Also being shown are some antique dolls she has refurbished after years of wear. One is 100 years old.



Christmas needs **electric trains**, and several sets are on display – thanks to Holcomb Nixon, a train enthusiast.

Come by the Museum to get in a holiday mood and enjoy the Christmas tree and toys we all love.

### MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Since Amherst County is celebrating its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011, the Activities Committee of the Museum has planned exciting events around the county for you to enjoy all year. Set aside the **third Sunday afternoon of each month from 2:00-4:00 p.m.**

**The first event is for members only on January 16, and is a rare chance to visit Mt. Sinai Church on old Elon Road.** ( From the intersection of Rt. 29 and 130W, go on 130W for 1.1 mile; turn right onto Rt. 705, .3 mile to church.) The church was organized in 1925, and in 1971, a brick building replaced a wooden one. There is a large cemetery there and paved parking lot. Most of the congregation is Afro-American, and they are very kind to open it for us. If a non-member wants to tour the church, he/she may **join** the Museum that day. Welcome to new members!

On **February 20, 2011**, Sandy Esposito will show slides and talk about the recent county survey of old buildings and sites that had not previously been recorded by the state. If you like local history and don't have the opportunity to drive around the county, this is your chance to see many places of interest. This will be at the **Museum**, and is **open to the public**. Don't miss this! It will start at **2:00 p.m.**

**In case of snow, events will be canceled.**

### 2011 Events

**Sunday, January 16, at Mt. Sinai—Members program from 2-4 p.m.**

**Sunday, February 20, Public program at the Museum from 2-4 p.m.**

**Saturday, April 30—Amherst County 250th Birthday Festival at the High School**

## **Thank You!**

### **Patrons**

*Mr. and Mrs. Will Mays, VA  
Mr. and Mrs. Holcomb Nixon, VA*

### **Donors**

*Dr. and Mrs. Bob Chase, VA  
Holly Mills, VA*

### **Friends**

*Alice Burnett, VA  
Mr. and Mrs. William Nine, VA  
Robert Sales, VA  
Mary Tourgee, VA*

### **Additional donations by:**

*Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Greco, VA  
Stephen Rudacille, FL*

### **Memorials for Helen Cruise Feagans**

*Susan O'Brien, CA*

### **Welcome New Members!**

*Donna Courtney, VA  
Lois Minton, KY  
Christine Taft, DC*

### **Thank you Coleman-Mays!**

*For porch repairs*

### **Thank you Food Lion!**

*For supporting our Cookies and Cocoa (see lower left)*

### **Thank you Milhous Electronics!**

*For garden repairs*

### **Thank you William M. Cage Library Trust!**

*For supporting our research library*

### **Thank you to our Volunteers!**

*The following volunteers have assisted at the Museum (on site) by helping with our annual Cookies & Cocoa, working on library projects, providing back-up support for the director and more!*

*Roger & Jackie Beidler  
Ellen Craig  
George Craig, III  
Midge Elliott  
Bill Hathaway  
Gloria Higginbotham  
Jean Higginbotham  
Susan Mays  
Kathryn Pixley*

*Tom Wallace  
Mary Wilhelm  
Helen Williams  
Sharon Williamson  
Lyl Wray*

### **Teen Volunteers**

*Emily Craig  
Andy Jordan  
Nick Szobatura*

### **Cookies & Cocoa at the Museum**

The children make ornaments to decorate their own tree at the Cookies and Cocoa party. We had well over a hundred visitors (guesstimates run about 150) at the Museum before the Christmas parade—we actually ran out of hot chocolate at one point! Many thanks to Food Lion for providing cookies and cocoa, and to volunteers Ellen, Tripp, and Emily Craig; Gloria and Jean Higginbotham; Mary Wilhelm and Helen Williams. The Judge's Choice award winning float by the Amherst County Sesquicentennial Committee (250<sup>th</sup> anniversary) is shown below.



### **Notes of Interest**

The Museum now has a group on Facebook. If you enjoy following your special interests in social media, you won't want to miss this! You can find us by clicking on the Facebook link from the Museum's home page.

The Museum can benefit from your online shopping without costing you anything! Start your shopping at [www.shopformuseums.com](http://www.shopformuseums.com) and select "Amherst County Museum and Historical Society" to benefit. Registration is free.

*The Muse, December 2010*

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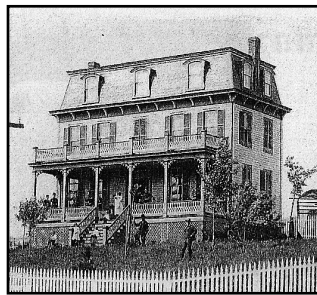
***Christmas in Amherst, 1901***  
*from the Richmond Dispatch, January 5, 1902*

*The Amherst People—What they Did Christmas—Personal Notes of Interest—Amherst, VA, January 4, 1902 (Special)*

Christmas at Amherst has been unusually bright and pleasant socially for the young people this year.

The fun began Christmas night when there was an informal gathering of young folks at the home of Mr. and Mrs. C.L. Scott.

Monday evening the Misses Dearborn had a delightful reception, followed on Tuesday evening by a dance at the same hospitable home.



*At right:* The Dearborn home was the site of Christmas gatherings in Amherst during the 1901 Christmas season.

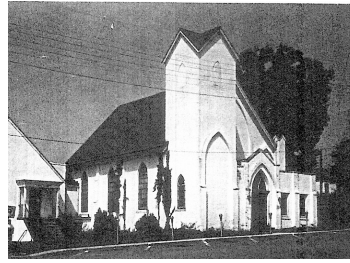
New-Year's night Miss Louise Scott and Messrs. Sam and Landon Scott entertained a large number of their friends at their home.

Among those present were Miss Leary McDonald, of Berryville, Miss Lucille Strode, of Lynchburg; Misses Mary and Sadie Dearborn, Katherine and Elizabeth Troy, Willie and Eva Wills, Bessie Robertson, and Emma Beard, of Amherst; Major W.J. Brodie, of Virginia Polytechnic Institute; Messrs Allen Hutcherson, of New York; Butler Claiborne, of New Glasgow; Charles Ellis, of High Point, N.C.; Ernest Landidge, W.K. Allen, Joseph Dobbs, W.H. Kent, Jr.; Walter Beard, Arthur Gray, of Amherst; Mr. and Mrs. S.S. Hopkins, Misses Pollard and Taylor, of Alexandria, and Fannie Claiborne, of New Glasgow.

The last of the entertainments was that given by Miss Bessie Robertson.

On Tuesday night there was a Christmas-tree for the Sunday school of the Methodist church, at which there was a large crowd present.

Misses Innes and Kate Randolph, who are students at the Randolph-Macon Woman's College, of



*At left:* The old Methodist church had a Christmas tree for the Sunday School

Lynchburg, spent the Christmas holidays at Mrs. O.L. Evan's home here.

Cadets Sam and Landon Scott, of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, spent Christmas with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. C.L. Scott, and had as their guest Major W.M. Brodie, of the same Institute.

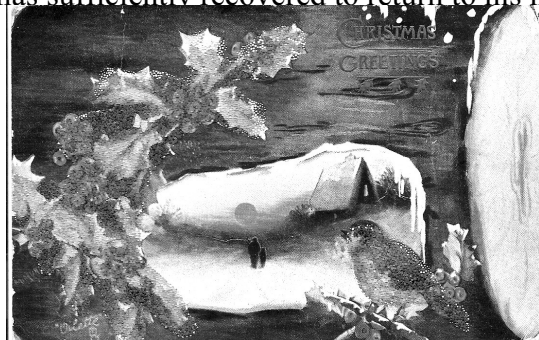
Miss Louise Scott, who has been visiting her uncle, Mr. A.L. Everett, of Cismont, Albemarle county, returned home last week.

Mr. Allen Hutcherson, of New York, is visiting his sister, Mrs. Mugge, at Mrs. John B. Robertson's.

Mr. Archie Robertson, of Havana, Cuba, was unexpectedly recalled to his duties there, while visiting his old home here, by a change in the United States officials in Cuba.

Miss M.C. Everett, of Keswick, Albemarle, has returned to Amherst from her visit to her home, "Belmont," in the county.

Mr. J.J. Wright, a prominent citizen of the Allwood neighborhood, who was painfully bruised by jumping from a moving train at Amherst Depot, a few days ago, has sufficiently recovered to return to his home.



*Above:* Penny postcard [To] Miss Sallie Claiborne, New Glasgow, Amherst Co, Va./Dear Sallie—Yr card rec'd. It was sweet...you to think of me. The children here all had a fine Xmas. Eddie and Helen went to a party last night. Freeman Kennedy is here. He & Eddie will leave on Sunday for V.P.I. Wish I could see you all. With love, ... Xmas 1908

## *New in our Collections*

The Carpenter collection, donated by Jane Carpenter Hollingsworth, is mostly agricultural items, but below are a few exceptions.



These are three bridge plaques from the Carpenter collection, each indicating the year each bridge was built. A chart of bridges and culverts can be found at [www.virginiadot.org/info/Bridge.asp](http://www.virginiadot.org/info/Bridge.asp) for more details about the bridges in Virginia.

Phyllis Ragland has donated several World War II items in memory of James Otis McCormick (*at right*). The collection includes a number of patches of military insignia.



The week before her death, Ann Loving donated the Elon Home Demonstration Club scrapbook from Amherst County's Bicentennial in 1961. The Museum now owns five of the Home Demonstration Club scrapbooks and they have been invaluable in planning for next year's 250th birthday of Amherst County.

*History Tech*, formerly *The Antiquaries*, has provided the Museum with copies of their survey work and notes from the Historic Resources Survey completed earlier this year. The bound report contains excellent summaries of the county's resources and is full of photos. The package includes DVDs of the photographs as well.

Our volunteers have completed another major project—an index to Amherst County's Agricultural Census of 1880. This can be downloaded from the Museum's website by going to the Library Resources page. Both 1870 and 1880 are now complete!

## *May 1, 1761, was a Friday.*

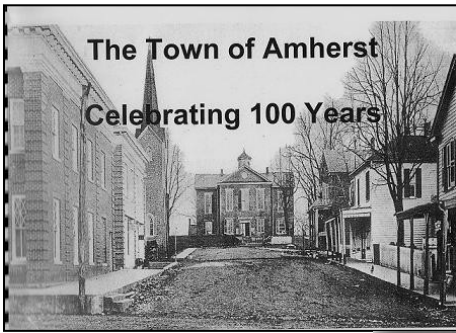
It was also the birth of Amherst County, a significant event for Virginia lands along the upper James River. It was carved out of Albemarle County which had been established in 1744. At the same time Amherst County was born, Albemarle also "gave birth" to another county—Buckingham. These "twin" counties, Amherst and Buckingham, were the first two of Albemarle's "daughter" counties, Fluvanna being created some years later in 1777.

In the 1740s one finds a number of lands being surveyed and patented in the area that would become Amherst County. Many of these lands were patented by men speculating in the real estate market, some by men looking for newer and richer lands for planting. By this time the lands in the tidewater region of Virginia were already claimed and some were beginning to feel the effects of overplanting. Both corn and tobacco wear out a land's nutrients and the soil will be depleted unless replenished. Some of these new western frontier men did both speculation and planting.

Some of the men who surveyed lands in the Albemarle area that would become Amherst are names still familiar to residents today—William Cabell, Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Turpin. In the 1750s John Smith, Jr. and Jonathan Staples would be surveying in the area as well. Early landowners also included names well known to us today—Robert Horsley, John Harvey, Nicholas Davis, Edward Watts, Aaron Higginbotham, James Christian, Robert Rose, Charles Lynch and more. The men who surveyed the lands were in the best position to see the potential fertile lands and made their claims accordingly.

As lands became settled the need for roads grew and some of the earliest records provide clues about the settling of the area. As early as 1745 one can find references to mills and ferries. In 1747 William Cabell gave bond to keep an *ordinary* at his ferry. (An *ordinary* was a building that provided lodging, meals and stables for travelers.)

For more information about the area before the county's establishment, consider the following resources at the Museum: *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants*, a multi-volume collection by Nell Marion Nugent; *Virginia Road Orders*, by the Virginia Transportation Research Council; and *The Statutes at Large: being a collection of all the Law of Virginia from the First Session...*, by William Waller Hening. — Holly Mills



(At left) A delightful pictorial filled with a century of reminiscences! Take a walk through the Town of Amherst, old and new. By Mary Frances Olinger and Leona Wilkins. \$18

## Christmas Shopping at the Museum's Gift Shop!

The selection of new Christmas gifts available in the Museum's Gift Shop is overflowing with possibilities this year. Stop by for your Christmas shopping, or order by mail using the form on our website at [www.amherstcountymuseum.org/giftshop.html](http://www.amherstcountymuseum.org/giftshop.html).

To celebrate Amherst County's 250th birthday, this 2011 calendar was created especially to feature the many facets of Amherst County. It features photos of places and artifacts from Naola and Snowden, Galt's Mill, Coffeytown, Madison Heights and Court House. Each month includes three snippets of trivia from county history, from the momentous to routine. \$7



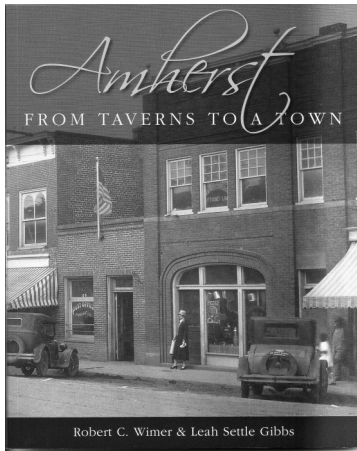
(At right) The communities along the Tobacco Row are the focus of this new book by Florence Foster Nixon. Filled with memoirs, photos and much more, this is truly a treasury for those who love Tobacco Row! \$25

In the Shadow of Tobacco Row Mountain



Elon, Monroe, and Other Villages

FLORENCE FOSTER NIXON



(At Left) If you were enticed by the columns of town history in the *New Era-Progress* during this centennial year, you will certainly want the full length versions and more in *Amherst: From Taverns to a Town*. By Bob Wimer and Leah Settle Gibbs, \$30 hard; \$20 soft



**The Perfect Gift!**  
**The Town of Amherst: Celebrating 100 Years**  
 Published by the Amherst County Museum and Historical Society  
 Available now 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.

### 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 at right.*

### Categories for Donations

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

## *In Amherst County*

**Sunday, January 16**, at Mt. Sinai Baptist Church from 2 to 4 p.m. Members only program.

**Saturday, February 12**, At the Amherst County Museum from 2 to 3 p.m. Valentines program for the younger set. Help us make Valentines for Fairmont and Johnson Center residents!

**Sunday, February 20**, at the Amherst County Museum from 2 to 4 p.m. Sandy Esposito will present a program on the county's historic resources survey. Open to the public.

**Saturday, April 30**, at the Amherst County High School. Amherst County 250th Birthday Festival.

The Museum plans to have a special event on the third Sunday afternoon of each month during 2011. Programs at the Museum are open to the public; programs offsite are members-only events. Encourage your friends and family to join the Museum so they can enjoy all of these opportunities!

## *Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*



The Amherst Woman's Club has graced us with their Angel Tree gifts every year, making our front Christmas tree a truly merry sight. At left is the Museum Christmas tree just before the Cookies & Cocoa event. It is a challenge to find room under the tree for the Woman's Club generosity!



At right, Santa's helpers fill a station wagon to the brim with gifts for Amherst County Seniors.

**Executive Board:**  
Leona Wilkins, President  
Bonnie Limbrick, Vice President  
Betty Glass, Secretary  
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Grady Davis  
Cynthia Hicks  
Holcomb Nixon  
Mary Frances Olinger  
Kathryn Pixley  
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**Amherst County Museum & Historical Society**

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