

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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June 2011

Busy, busy, busy! There is so much going on at the Museum these days that it becoming a struggle to fit it all into six pages every two months. We simply couldn't do it this time, so enjoy the extra two pages for a *Muse* that is just chock full!

The house tours featuring different parts of the county continue to be popular. On **Sunday, June 19**, our members will be treated to a tour of the National Register home, *Speed the Plough*, near Elon. See page 3 for more about this National Register home. In July, members can tour Forest Hill, another National Register property in Temperance. Mark your calendar for **Sunday, July 17**, for this tour. Page 4 tells more about this home. Both are from 2 to 4 p.m. and are free to members.

Later in July, the Amherst County Steering Committee for the Civil War 150th Anniversary has arranged for the Civil War HistoryMobile to come to Amherst County. This event, from

Annual Meeting September 10

Plan ahead, and make a note of **Saturday, September 10**, at 11:30 a.m. for the Museum's Annual Meeting and Luncheon at Winton Country Club. This year our featured speaker will be Patrick Schroeder from the Appomattox Battlefield Park. He will present as George Peers, Court Clerk for Appomattox County relating events of April, 1865. The August issue of the *Muse* will provide more information about the program. This will be a treat you don't want to miss!

July 27-29, will coincide with the Madison Heights Library's Summer Reading Program. It is an honor for Amherst County to be chosen as the first local stop for the Civil War HistoryMobile after its premier at Manassas! To prepare for this, the *Muse* offers an article about Amherst County's Civil War heritage, written by Faith Hoffma, on pages 5 and 6.

Coming Events

Sunday, June 19—Members event at *Speed the Plough* from 2-4

Sunday, July 17—Members event at *Forest Hill* from 2-4

Wednesday, July 27 to Friday, July 29—Civil War HistoryMobile at *Madison Heights Branch Library* (general public)

Sunday, August 21—Clifford School program at Clifford Ruritan, 2 p.m. (general public)

Welcome New Members!

Wayne, Sr., and Judy Adams, VA
Russell, Sr., & Anne Bailey, VA
The Barnes family, VA
Bonnie S. Brown, VA
Howard, Sr., & Nell Cobb, VA
Carl & Mary Culberson, CA
Pete & Barbara Cunningham, VA
Sam & Jean DeLaura, VA
D. Diuguid, VA
Robert Reeves and Wayne Ferguson, VA
Libby & David Fulton, VA
Sue Harvey, VA
Alvin & Elaine Hatter, VA
Mary Kerr, IL
Dr. and Mrs. David G. Lockwood, VA
Theodor Mason, VA
Imogean McDonald, AL
James McDowell, VA
Bernie & Kate McGinnis, VA
Jan & Douwina Osinga, VA
Don Pendleton, VA
Ned and Florence Perrow, VA
Adam & Ellen Pettyjohn, VA
Susan & Lee Piepho, VA
Robert & Karen Reciniello, VA
Ron & Judy Reyburn, VA
Anne Richards, VA
Holly Runquist, WI
Sara Wilson Saunders, VA
Lisa Senior, MD
David Shapiro, FL
Melinda Tennis, VA
Warren & Shirley Thomas, NY
Martha Whitt, AL

Amherst County celebrates 250 years!

From left: The Hon. Michael Gamble, Mr. David Proffitt, Rev. Hugh Baumgarner, Mr. John Young, Del. Ben Cline, Ms. Claudia Tucker, Del. Scott Garrett, Chief Kenneth Branham, Ms. Cassie Carter, Mr. Robert Curd and Ms. Juanita Roberson.



Thank you to our Volunteers!

The following volunteers have assisted at the Museum (on site) working on library projects, providing back-up support for the director and more!

Mary Brugh
Ellen Craig
Midge Elliott
Mark Furlow
Bill Hathaway

Kathryn Pixley
Tom Wallace
Mary Wilhelm

Teen Volunteer
Emily Craig

Thank You!

Many thanks to Bob Wimer and Ralph Smith for their most informative program about the Amherst County batteau. The program, held at the Museum, was a great opportunity for all to share stories about life on the river and also to talk about the upcoming James River Batteau Festival. For more information about the festival, see vacanals.org/batteau/.

Special thanks to **Drs. Norman and Joanne Harris** for their gracious hospitality for opening their home to us! Many thanks also to the many volunteers and florists for making our Geddes home tour such a success.

Patrons

Morris Orchards, VA

Friends

Evelyn Caldwell, VA
Stanley Dawson, VA
Sam & Jean DeLaura, VA
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...And especially for the Conservation Fund

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis J. Cooke, VA
Dr. and Mrs. David G. Lockwood, VA

Speed the Plough Tour
Sunday, June 19 from 2 to 4 p.m.



The Amherst County Museum will be sponsoring a tour for its members at *Speed the Plough*, a National Register property near Elon. The tour, from 2 to 4 p.m., is one of this year's special events for celebrating Amherst County's 250th anniversary and is one of the ways the Museum expresses its thanks to members for their support.

Speed the Plough, c. 1850, is a classic Greek Revival home, originally a three-story, six room structure, built on a three hundred acre estate that had belonged to Col. Charles Ellis. William Dearing and his wife, Jane Eastham Dearing, purchased the property from Col. Ellis' widow in 1850. Constructed of bricks produced on the estate, the property still boasts the kiln wherein the bricks were fired. Additionally, the house has a hip roof and end chimneys. Its rooms are two over two with a central staircase and six fireplaces.

Shortly after Rowland and Theodora Stevens Lea bought the place in the mid 1920s, they added a kitchen/dining room, as well as closets and bathrooms for three bedrooms. A porch was also added. In 1933, Theodora's brother, George C. Stevens, joined the business and increased the number of outbuildings—a barn, the Rock Cottage (a one and a half story vacation home) and a lovely rock wall to border the entrance drive. In 1938, Rowland Lea's nephew, Philip Girling, arrived to help manage the orchards.

Speed the Plough is now the home for the Girlings' son, Dr. Rowland Girling, and his wife, Lorri. They had the c. 1799 stone Springhouse restored in 2007 and are currently adding a conservatory to the main house. The estate also features a reservoir with ponds and lake, the Dearing family cemetery and two African-American cemeteries. Today, the Girlings operate the mansion house as a bed and breakfast. For this special occasion, the Pedlar Valley Garden Club is coordinating floral arrangements.



The tour is limited to members of the Amherst County Museum and is free of charge. To become a member, visit :

www.amherstcountymuseum.org or call 946-9068 for membership information, or join the Museum on the day of the tour.

Above: The central staircase. One can see more pictures of Speed the Plough on its Facebook page.

DIRECTIONS: To get to *Speed the Plough*, drive Route 130 west through Elon, turn right on Ambrose Rucker Road (Route 653), to the sign on the right in less than a mile.

Information about *Speed the Plough* is primarily from its National Register Nomination. To see the full nomination, go to <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers>

Forest Hill Tour
Sunday, July 17, from 2 to 4 p.m.

The white frame house at Forest Hill, sometimes called Fourth Till, sits on a rise overlooking the Temperance community. The red roof can be seen for miles around.



William Macon Waller added extensively to this "I" house about 1816 on land first patented by the Rev. Robert Rose. It is believed that the original portion of the house may date from 1803. It remained in the Waller family until 1921 when it was sold to Lipscomb Wood. Thomas Tucker bought the house and 220 acres in 1956 and added the property to the Tucker farm.

Over the years the house has been extensively modified and is now a "T" shaped structure. Rooms have been demolished and new wings added, consequently one of the chimneys is near the center of the building.

The entryway has double doors topped by a lunette with Gothic arch muntin bars. The living room has exceptionally fine detail in the wainscoting and fireplace. Some of the floors are of the old, original pine.

At one time there was a one-acre formal garden off the front porch. The outbuildings include a



smokehouse as old as the main house, an icehouse and several barns.

William Macon Waller served Amherst County in many different offices including Justice of the Peace, School Commissioner, Sheriff, and as a Delegate to the Virginia Legislature. He also owned the mill known as the Rockmill in Lowesville (now part of a separate property). Over the years the original plantation produced tobacco and corn. Today, cattle occupy the old fields.

Currently, Bill Tucker and his wife, Claudia, occupy the main house and work to maintain the history and the historical setting of the farm. Pastures stocked with their award-winning cattle that includes registered Red Angus surround the house. In 2000, the Tucker Family Farms was named Outstanding Commercial Producer of the Year by the Virginia Cooperative Association and were the first recipients of the Chesapeake Clean Water Farm Award.



Below, left: Details of the entrance, especially the keystone arch, are exceptionally fine, as well as the carved stair rails which are shown at right. The woodwork at Forest Hill shows Amherst County at some of its finest.

DIRECTIONS: Starting at the Circle in Amherst, take 60 west to Route 778 and turn right on Lowesville Road. Pass the Temperance School, turn left on Indian Creek Road. The driveway is a left turn, exactly 13 miles from the circle. Look for our signs. The Mountain view on the way is truly spectacular!

A Present and Pressing Necessity: The Story of Secession in Amherst County

By Faith Hoffma

The following paper was prepared last year for a course at VCU and edited for newsletter publication. Many thanks to Faith Hoffma for her willingness to share it with the Museum!

Amherst County, Virginia, upon the eve of the Civil War in 1860, was a quiet county with a total population of 14,316. However, on Dec. 17, 1860, before the pivotal secession of South Carolina, it was determined at a county meeting that:

Resolved, That no free people should place themselves in the power and at the mercy of those who are unfriendly to them - the loss of liberty would be the penalty of such folly. It is, therefore, a present and pressing necessity that all questions disturbing the harmony of the States, and especially those vital questions of alleged antagonism between the slave and free States, should now be settled and settled for all time to come.

Small and quiet Amherst County was not afraid to face the dark clouds of possible civil war that loomed ahead. From early on, she was prepared to take her stand.

Virginia was very divided over the question of secession in the days leading up to the Civil War. This split in sentiment was most keenly felt from east to west - the east tending to be secessionist and the west tending to be unionist. Although one would suspect Amherst County, based on its location, to align itself with the western portion of the state, she seemed to have the mindset of the east from the very beginning. Whereas the majority of the elected members of the Constitutional Convention of 1861 were unionist, Amherst County chose a delegate that would twice vote for secession. Furthermore, when the people of the State of Virginia voted on whether or not to secede from the union, the Amherst County vote was unanimous in its support for secession.

Clearly, Amherst was a secessionist county. It also was a county that had a large number of slaves in relation to the number of white people living in it. In the census of 1860, Amherst

County was listed as having 7,136 whites and 6,847 slaves. However, the number of black people just surpasses the number of white people when the 333 free blacks living in the county are added to the number. The reasons that Amherst County supported secession may have included the issue of slavery. Not only was slavery a way of life for the people of the county but for many it supported their livelihood. States' rights were another factor as well.

When Amherst County elected the delegate they would send to the Constitutional Convention of 1861, they voted unanimously for Samuel Meredith Garland to represent them. He was a man who was in the upper crust of society in the county. Not only did he have the family background, but he had money, education, land, and slaves. His story is interesting and important due to the role he played in Amherst, as well as its typifying the lifestyle of the wealthy of that area. His story is a human one, for he would suffer the loss of family members and much of his wealth, like so many other Virginians.

Samuel Meredith Garland was born on November 15, 1802, into a wealthy family with ties to a Revolutionary War hero—Patrick Henry. Garland was the grand-nephew of Patrick Henry. He went to both William and Mary College and Princeton University in the 1820s, and became a lawyer. He married Mildred Irving Powell in 1830, with whom he would have twelve children. That same year he served in the state legislature for Amherst County. Sometime between 1830 and 1837 he stopped practicing law due to his health and in 1837 became the Clerk of the County Court of Amherst. This position he held until 1864.

During the intervening years between 1837 and 1864, his wealth increased. In 1840, according to the census, he owned fourteen slaves. Ten years later, his real estate value was \$7000. Then, in 1860, the census recorded that he owned thirty-two slaves, had a real estate value of \$14,000, and a personal estate value of \$27,000. In ten years, his real estate value had doubled. Also, with the use of this labor force, Garland built his family a house in 1859, which is today known as "Kenmore." Moving closer in time

to the start of the Civil War, he did have one political highlight, and this was that he was a representative to the earlier Constitutional Convention of 1850 - 1851.

As was stated before, Amherst County unanimously voted to have Garland represent them in the later Constitutional Convention of 1861. Although Garland did not play a great part in the Convention, he did propose on March 1 that the voters of Virginia should decide the issue of secession. His resolution was as follows:

Resolved, That an ordinance should be passed by this Convention, submitting to the qualified voters of this State, the question whether Virginia shall remain attached to the Northern Confederacy, or whether she shall secede and unite her destiny with the States of the Southern Confederacy.

In addition to this, Garland made a speech in late April, within a couple of days of Gen. Robert E. Lee receiving a commission as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of Virginia. Garland was concerned with the issue presently at hand in the Convention—what sort of military action to take. He was more or less of the conviction that some of those matters should largely be left to Gen. Lee.

Garland would suffer much personal loss as a result of secession and the Civil War. Of three sons who served in the Confederate Army, two would not live to see the end of the war. He also lost a son-in-law at the Battle of Gettysburg. The widow and children of his son-in-law were listed as living with him in 1870. Also in the 1870 census, Garland was listed as a farmer, as aforementioned he was no longer Clerk of the Court after 1864. The census also added that his real estate value was \$10,000, whereas his personal estate value was around \$825. The total value of his estate, then, went from \$41,000 in 1860 to roughly \$10,825 in 1870. This means he lost three-quarters of his overall wealth from 1860 - 1870 and that virtually all of his remaining wealth was in land. He did keep his

home, however, and upon his death in 1880 he was buried there.

Amherst County placed her future entirely with the Southern Confederacy. She tended to be a secessionist county from early on in the talk about secession. Samuel Meredith Garland, being appointed to represent Amherst in the Constitutional Convention of 1861, voted twice for secession. When the vote went back to the people of the Virginia to approve secession, Amherst whole-heartedly supported it. As seen in Samuel Meredith Garland's life, however, there were dire consequences to this decision. Many loved ones died and much wealth was lost. Ultimately, Amherst County would rebuild and move on, and eventually a better social structure would exist in Amherst County, the State of Virginia, and the nation. The Garlands would move on, too, and members of the family would assume places of leadership around the country in the following decades.

Bibliography

- 1840 U.S. Federal Census
- 1850 U.S. Federal Census
- Biographical genealogies of the Virginia-Kentucky Floyd Families, by Nicholas Jackson Floyd.
- Garland family history by Thomas Whitehead, in the author's possession
- http://byrnefamily.net/e107_plugins/tngIL/getperson.php?personID=I00896&tree=Garland
- Journals and Papers, Virginia State Convention of 1861, Library of Virginia, 1966
- Notes on Samuel Meredith Garland by Samuel Bassett French (from the Samuel Bassett French Collection, Library of Virginia)
- Pioneer Settlers of Grayson County, Virginia, by Benjamin Floyd Nuckolls. Page 146. 1914
- Showdown in Virginia: The 1861 Convention and the Fate of the Union, Freehling and Simpson
- WPA Survey Report on Kenmore, Feb. 16, 1937

New in the Library

- **Mount Sinai Baptist Church Cemetery 2011: Pictures of Grave Markers**, by Barbara & Payton Cunningham. This DVD is a valuable complement to the forthcoming Gravestone Inscriptions of Amherst County, volume 2 (not yet released), and the result of an untold number of hours of research!
- **The Magazine of Albemarle County History**, 1960 to present, donated by the Albemarle-Charlottesville Historical Society.
- **St. Mark's Church: History**, compiled by Jackie Beidler for the 250th anniversary of Amherst County.



New in our Collections!

On a recent visit home to see family and friends, Peggy Gregory Lau visited the Museum with some delightful artifacts that will be making their home here.

Some of the items include an 1867 New Testament (well-read!), Pierce's Memorandum and Account Book, printed some time after Dr. R.V. Pierce resigned his seat in Congress (1880), Margaret Cash's autograph book from 1926-7, several 1899 cancelled checks from the Bank of Amherst, a children's booklet beautifully illustrated and printed in Saxony entitled *The Old Oaken Bucket*, inscribed "to Norbon, from his mother, December 25, 1876" and several copies of the Madison Heights High School yearbook, *The Monelison*, from the 1920s.

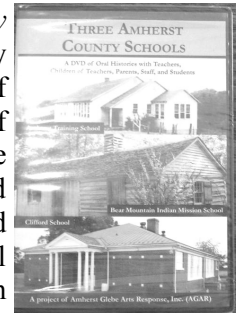
Helping the Museum While You Shop Online!

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

To date, only four people have selected to use this site for the Museum's benefit, resulting in one \$20 donation each year for the past two years. Imagine, if we could get 40 people to shop online for the Museum's benefit, *at no extra cost*, that could result in an average **\$200 donation** each year! Spreading the word could make that difference.

New in the Gift Shop

The DVD, *Three Amherst County Schools*, is the result of oral history interviews with teachers, children of teachers, parents, staff and students of Amherst County schools of diverse communities in the early to mid twentieth century. Schools included are the Amherst Training School describes the education of African Americans in the county, the Bear Mountain Indian School tells about the education of Monacan children. The Clifford school interviews focus on the education of rural white children in the community of Clifford. This DVD is a real treat for all who are interested in the history of Amherst County's educational system. Created and published by the *Amherst Glebe Arts Response, Inc. (AGAR)*.



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.

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

Conservation Fund _____
Annex Fund _____

Museum Calendar

Sunday, June 19, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. History and tour of the historic Elon home, *Speed the Plough*. This event is a special **Members Privilege** event.

Sunday, July 17, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. History and tour of the historic Temperance home, *Forest Hill*. This event is a special **Members Privilege** event.

Sunday, August 21, at 2 p.m., the old Clifford School will be the focus of a program at the old schoolhouse, now the Clifford Ruritan Club on Fletcher's Level Road

Saturday, September 10, at 11:30 a.m. at Winton Country Club.

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



Many organizations in Amherst County are celebrating this 250th birthday with regular and special events. To keep up with these programs, monitor the Museum's Sesquicentennial Events page at:

www.amherstcountymuseum.org/county250events.html

Wednesday, July 27 through Friday, July 29 at the Madison Heights Branch Library. The Civil War HistoryMobile will be making its first local stop in Virginia by coming to Amherst County!

Monday, July 4 from 12:30 to 5 p.m. in downtown Amherst. Amherst County Chamber of Commerce, Amherst Rotary, County of Amherst and Town of Amherst will be sponsoring a Fourth of July Festival.

Saturday, September 24, Amherst County Agriculture Day. Watch for more details.

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