

# The Muse

## Amherst County Museum & Historical Society

staff@amherstcountymuseum.org

www.amherstcountymuseum.org

(434) 946-9068

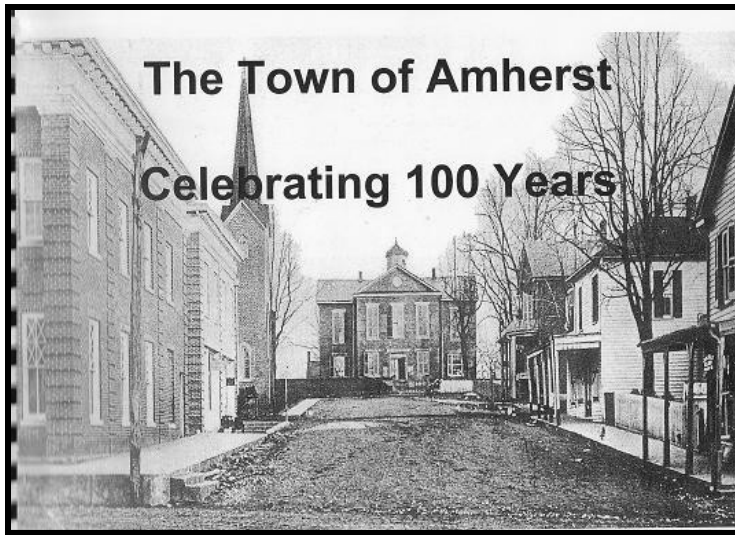
Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to noon and 1p.m. to 5 p.m.

VOLUME 35, NUMBER 2

May 2010

Photographs of the town's mayors, councilmen, doctors and more!

Check out the newspaper ads from the 1940s and 1950s!



Discover the town's first gas station, fire station, first running water and many more *firsts!*

See what the town looked like when it was new!

### *Coming in April!*

*The Museum's NEW BOOK about the first hundred years of the town of Amherst!*

This book has many pictures and history at the affordable price of \$18 and is scheduled for release in April for the town's centennial. You will want to put your name on the list to have one reserved for you! Call the Museum at 946-9068, or mail your order to the Museum's giftshop (the order form can be found at: [www.amherstcountymuseum.org/giftshop.html](http://www.amherstcountymuseum.org/giftshop.html)). Or just pick one up at the high school on Founders Day!

### Coming Up!

Saturday, May 22 at 10 a.m.— Amherst Stories from the Front Porch  
Paul Wailes, Leah Settle Gibbs, Jimmy Settle, Helen Massie, Ray Smith and Will Mays

## ***New in the Library***

- *Pittsylvania County Virginia Inventories & Accounts Current, 1770-1797*, compiled by Lucille C. Payne.
- *The Marriage License Bonds of Lancaster County, Virginia from 1701 to 1848*, by Stratton Hottingham, published by Clearfield, 2002 (originally published 1927).
- *Virginia: A Commonwealth Comes of Age*, an illustrated history by Lisa Antonelli Bacon, American Historical Press, 2004.
- *Sorting Some of the Wrights of Southern Virginia*, a 4 CD set containing five parts and sources to accompany the multivolume set about the Wright family as compiled by Robert N. Grant.
- *My Coffey, Stratton and Related Families of Virginia*, compiled and written by Dianne McGinley Gardner, 2009.

## ***Daisy Visits the Museum Saturday, April 10 at 10 a.m.***

The year is 1882, and 13-year-old Daisy Williams has stopped in to pay us a visit before she returns to school in New York City. Daisy will tell us about her family and their home at Sweet Briar.



### **Mark Your Calendars!**

#### **Annual Yard Sale Saturday, June 5**

We need your donations! The Museum's annual Yard Sale will be on Saturday, June 5. We welcome lightly used household items, decorative pieces, linens, artwork, bric-or-brac, etc; no clothes, please. Baked items will also be welcomed. Bring your items to the Museum the week before Sale Day. Cash donations are always welcome.

The sale is scheduled for 7 to noon on Saturday, June 5 and will be held in our annex.

**Our job is to take care of Amherst County's heritage, and we need your help to do it!**

---

### ***Welcome to our new members!***

*Skip and Jane Hansberry, Amherst, VA*

*Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Chockley, Efland, NC*

*Charles Scott, Pensacola, FL*

---

### ***Stories from the Front Porch!***

Our Winter program of reminiscences from the famed storytellers of the Town of Amherst was so popular that we've been asked to do another one! Join us on Saturday, May 22, at 10 a.m. for even more stories about the Town of Amherst. Bring a lawn chair or spread out a blanket and settle down for a trip down memory lane! In case of bad weather, come to the Annex in back.

## ***Genealogy Research Sources Available At The Museum***

If you're thinking of researching your Amherst County family tree, why not make the Amherst County Museum and Historical Society one of your first stops? The museum has a research room that is crammed full with all sorts of family information and records. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced researcher, there is bound to be some hidden treasure just waiting to be uncovered for your family tree. Some of the many wonderful genealogy resources we have include, marriage, birth and death indexes, abstracts of wills and deed records, family files, census record indexes and images, tax records, newspapers on microfilm, church records and tombstone inscriptions. We also have a variety of sources about the history Amherst County, such as maps, files on buildings of historical interest and industries in the area, as well as historical areas and houses. While you're here you can also browse our gift shop where we have a variety of books pertaining to family and area history available for purchase. So, come visit us and maybe add another leaf to your family tree. As always our friendly, knowledgeable staff is here to assist you with your research.

# Town and House Tour 2010

Saturday, April 17 from 9:30 to 1 p.m.

\$10 for three homes, or \$5 each—Bonus! Mill and four churches are free!

## Edgewood 138 Garland Avenue



On the National Historic Registry, Edgewood was built in 1818, by Arthur B. Davies. Known at the time as Arthur's Folly, Edgewood later served as the Higginbotham Academy for girls in the 1850s as well as a meeting place for the Clinton Masonic Lodge. Judge Taylor Berry (his door plate is still on the front door) acquired the property in the later 1850s and his descendents lived in the home until the mid 1990s. The oldest section features Federal and Greek Revival technologies and style, and comprises 4,500 square feet of the 8,500 total.

Interesting interior details of the old section include nine fireplaces with complex carved mantels, a circular staircase leading from the entry hall, past the curved door room to the third floor landing, and perhaps the most striking of all, a three-wall mural in the drawing room done by an itinerant painter around 1830. The mural's vivid Indo-Chinese style scenes including tiger hunts, ladies on elephants and men picking oranges, were discovered in the 1970s when layers of the wallpaper were removed. They were featured in the magazine, *Antiques*, in March 1984. The 1972 addition features a sunken marble pool resembling a Roman bath.

## The Hobbs Place 216 Garland Avenue



This brick house was built by the widow Vara Page in 1952 who lived there with her daughter Virginia. It was the home of Frank T. "Bunny" and Margie Bryant Burks from 1968 until her death in 1990. Burks and his new wife Lil sold the house in 2001 to Jack and Peggy Hobbs who currently reside in the home with their son Jay.

The house contains both contemporary furniture and family pieces. Important features of the structure include two large second floor bedrooms, a finished half basement, a walk-up attic and a beautiful basement-level patio and English boxwoods in the back yard. A brick breezeway connects the dwelling to a single car garage. The property extends all the way down the hill from Garland Avenue to Scott's Hill Road and was once a portion of the Scott apple orchard.

## The Baker-Cash Place 355 North Main Street



In 1937 Charles Raymond and Margaret Cash Gregory built this house on eight lots bought from Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Gannaway. Built at the end of the Great Depression, the house contains six rooms, two baths, central heat and hardwood floors at a cost of just over \$5000.

During the late 1930s and 40s the upstairs bedrooms were rented out to engineers at American Cyanamide, including Stephen Lamanna who later built the brick ranch across the street. Later Sweet Briar professors lived here also.

In the 50s and 60s the house also was a tourist home for travelers and young men dating Sweet Briar girls. Guests remember Margaret's pound cake and whole wheat bread and Raymond's coffee.

The side yard (lot) was a garden; the back contained grapes, raspberries and also vegetables. Ducks, geese, chickens, pigs and a goat lived in the back lot.

For the past twenty years this home has been the residence of Margaret and Raymond Gregory's nephew, Marvin Cash and partner William Baker, who continue the tradition of southern hospitality.

**A \$10 ticket includes these three homes—Edgewood, The Hobbs Place and The Baker-Cash Place, or you can see individual homes for \$5 per home.**

**Ascension Church  
253 South Main Street**



Bishop John Johns consecrated the new brick church as Ascension Church in 1848. The Reverend David Caldwell became the first rector. Five determined men were inspired to have the church built: Dr. Henry Landon Davies, Mr. Marshall Harris, Capt. William Waller, Mr. Ben Taliaferro and Zachary Tinsley. The land had been donated by Mr. Elijah Fletcher and the widowed Mrs. David Garland also contributed substantially. Rev. David Caldwell was the son-in-law of William Waller and the grandson-in-law of Jane Meredith Garland (David Shepherd Garland's wife).

The contractor and builder was Hickman Meredith. The one story, gable roof, gable end in front with a later Gothic-revival central square, three story tower has had several additions over the years. In 1853 Elijah Fletcher donated the bell that is still in use. In 1875 the church was enlarged to include a recess chancel, organ chamber, baptistry and vestry room. In 1892, the six stained glass windows were installed. Notable features are the rose window and pointed arch windows in the tower, which is a local landmark. 1922 saw the addition of the parish house. Over the past century and a half, devoted parishioners have memorialized their fellow parishioners with gifts of altar and chancel linens, communion service and rail, lectern, pulpit and lectern, chandeliers and chairs. Further information can be found on tablets within the sanctuary.

**Amherst Presbyterian Church  
163 Second Street**



The Amherst Presbyterian congregation was first organized May 26, 1831. Sessions met in an open field adjacent to the courthouse or at the Episcopal Church in

New Glasgow (Clifford).

On August 12, 1878, a deed was recorded in which Robert M. Brown donated the property on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street for the church and a brick edifice was erected which “was perfect in its proportions and modeled after many churches in Northern Italy.”

The first major remodeling of the church started in 1917 and included stained glass memorial windows, new pews and a furnace. The pulpit came from the Waynesboro Presbyterian Church and the memorial windows from St. Louis. The church was remodeled in 1938, and the basement rooms were completed in 1944 to be used for Sunday School and family meals. In later years other changes were made, notably the education annex in 1956. In 1961 the church was again remodeled and the sanctuary repainted. During the 1970s the basement rooms, by then in disuse, were repainted and freshened up for the use of the church youth.

**Morningstar Baptist Church  
100 Star Street**



Mount Olivet Baptist Church was established in 1876, as the first and only place of worship for Negro residents within the Town of Amherst. Mount Olivet not only served as a spiritual beacon to its members; the church also established the first schoolhouse where the town’s Negro children were educated.

Mount Olivet quickly outgrew its small building and was forced to seek alternate structures to accommodate its growing membership. Church elders formed a committee and set forth with their efforts to secure building materials to expand its current structure, until a more appropriate location and structure could be located. The committee soon discovered an abandoned tobacco warehouse located within a small neighborhood at the intersection of Needmore Street and Mt. Olive Road. Following extensive discussion, the church family found itself at an impasse; some church members wanted to remain in the original church structure, while others advocated for relocation. Unwavering convictions on both sides lead to the division of the church family.

Those members wanting to remain were allowed to do so and those desiring relocation moved into their new structure at the intersection of Needmore Street and Mt. Olive Road. Those relocating retained the established church name, *Mount Olive*

*Baptist Church*, all monies within the established church treasury, the church bell and current church leader, Pastor Harrison P. Goode. Members remaining within the original structure retained the church property, building and schoolhouse. Members immediately set about the task of re-establishing and rebuilding their 'new' church. Records indicate that the remaining members held a prayer vigil to seek guidance in re-establishing the church's identity. It is further reported that upon exiting the prayer meeting, members became inspired by witnessing the *morning star*. This inspiration became the catalyst for a renewed spirit, a new beginning and a new church.

Since its inception, *Morning Star Baptist Church* has provided spiritual guidance and a constant haven of worship for its devoted members. The leadership of nine pastors, Rev. Robert G. Butcher as the longest serving pastor, ensured Morning Star's endurance throughout years of numerous transitions and enhancements to its building and grounds. In March 2009, Morning Star Baptist Church welcomed its new and current pastor, Rev. Francisco Mayo. Under his formidable leadership, Morning Star has been revitalized. The transformed spirit of its church family has re-energized productivity and inspired a renewed sense of purpose. Morning Star's rich history, humble beginning, unyielding leadership and the dedication of its members, serves as the foundation on which the church constructs its future. A product of faith and conviction, Morning Star Baptist Church continues to serve as a beacon for its growing church family.

**Mount Olive Baptist  
160 West Court Street**



A few months after the church was established in 1899, Rev. Harrison P. Goode was ordained and called as the first Pastor. The officials and members of the young church thought it befitting to call one of their own "sons" who had the well being and success of the newly formed church at heart.

The first Annual Revival was held the first week in October, 1900. The evangelist for the week was Reverend Sandy Garland of Lynchburg, Virginia. During the Revival, there were 99 converts.

Rev. Benjamin A. Carrington was called to Mt. Olive in 1919. During his pastorate, the membership increased rapidly and the Ladies Aid Club was organized on August 7, 1923. Rev. Carrington had concern for the religious nurture of children and youth but not to the neglect of others.

In 1930, Rev. James H. Jones was called to the pastorate of Mt. Olive. Cris Thompson and William Mosby were ordained Deacons during Pastor Jones' administration. In addition to becoming a Deacon, Cris Thompson also became a member of the Board of Trustees. After four years of faithful service, Pastor Jones resigned.

Rev. W. D. Johnson was called to the pastorate of Mt. Olive in 1935. During his tenure, the Men's Pioneer Club was organized (1938). The vestibule was added to the church in 1938. Rev. Johnson was a kind and conscientious person who upon many occasions expressed his dedication to Kingdom building through songs. He resigned after six years of faithful service.

In 1942, Mount Olive called the Rev. E. D. Irvine as Pastor. Rev. Irvine was born in Lynchburg, where he attended school. He then went to Virginia Union University in Richmond, where he was awarded the B.Th. degree. He also taught in the Amherst County Public School System. Under his leadership the church made tremendous growth both physically and spiritually. In 1944, the Men's Pioneer Club and the Ladies Aid Club united and became the Ladies Aid and Men's Pioneer Club. The Climbing Vine Club was organized in 1944. The Amherst County Training School held many graduations at the church due to a lack of adequate facilities at the school. The Usher Board was organized in May, 1950. The Pastor's Aid Club was organized on February 11, 1951. Rev. Purvis Rose became Associate Minister. The Gospel Chorus was organized in 1968.

During Rev. Irvine's administration, some improvements to the physical appearance of Mount Olive including underpinning, conversion from coal to oil heat, brick siding and frosted glass windows were installed, replacement of the old pews and AC units added. Rev. Irvine resigned in 1980. and was followed by Rev. Austin who retired in 2002. Rev. Kelvin R. Brown is the current pastor.

**Amherst Milling  
140 Union Hill Road**



No one has determined exactly when the first mill was built here on Rutledge Creek. However, James Franklin bequeathed a mill and lot to two daughters in a will of March 11, 1813. the original wooden dam to contain the water was well upstream, and the millrace was nearly a mile long.

Through the years there have been at least four owners before Richard Wydner purchased the works in 1940 from Mr. Baldock. At one time there was a mercantile complex at the site, including flour, saw, and plaster mills, an ice house, a store, and two dwelling houses. (continued on page 6)

(continued from page 5) The Fitz Steel Wheel, installed in 1908, is still operational, but the milling today is powered by electricity. Livestock and animal feeds are ground and mixed daily and custom-ground flour may be purchased at the mill.

The following are of some other points of interest in the Town of Amherst:



The Amherst traffic circle was first constructed in a round-about way in the early 1930s at the crossing of US 29 and US 60. It is one of the only two highway circles remaining in Virginia dating from that period. For years the Village Garden Club has tended flower gardens in the circle, and it has become a local landmark. The circle was renovated several years ago with the installation of a fountain, and won first place in the Jamestown 2007 statewide garden clubs competition for small communities.




After Nelson County was formed from Amherst County in 1807, Amherst County needed a new courthouse. On June 1, 1808, at a meeting at New Glasgow (now Clifford), county commissioners selected The Oaks as the site of the new courthouse to be erected on two acres deeded by the heirs of George Coleman. A two story wood frame building was quickly erected and the first court was held on Tuesday, September 26, 1809. The handsome old part of the present brick courthouse was built in 1870. It was painted white in the 1930s, and in the 1990s a major addition was dedicated on the east side creating the modern front entrance to this building.



The Amherst County Museum is currently located in a Georgian Revival home built in 1907. It was built by a local pharmacist, Dr. Kearfott, who had his business at the same location as the former Amherst Pharmacy on Main Street. In 1922, Mr. Wade Wood, a grocer of sixty years in the town of Amherst, purchased the property. His two daughters grew up here and the house was the scene of many community activities. Of particular note were Mr. Wood's Sunday croquet games. After Mr. Wood's passing in 1960, his wife Mrs. Molly Wood continued to live in the house until her death in 1977. The Museum purchased the property in 1988.

The ArtMeters currently in downtown Amherst will be changed out in June. Be sure to see them out before the new ones are installed!



**2 p.m. at ACHS**

Keynote Speaker:  
John Warner

Information and display tables

Skit by ACHS Drama Group

Introduction of Amherst  
County Museum history book

Introduction of  
School Alphabet Book

Town shirts, caps & cups  
for sale

Vintage vehicles on display

Souvenir history/program booklet

Special recognition of  
town citizens over 90  
and first baby

**Founders Day**  
**Saturday, April 17**

9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Town and House Tour  
2 p.m. Program at the High School  
5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Fire Department  
Fundraiser Dinner  
at the Fire Department on Second Street

Please note that the Museum has a new email  
address: [staff@amherstcountymuseum.org](mailto:staff@amherstcountymuseum.org)



**154 South Main Street**  
Amherst County Museum and  
Historical Society

## Centennial Parade and Street Fair

### Downtown Amherst

Saturday, June 12 from 11 .m. to 3 p.m.

Featuring display tables and booths, food, live music, clowns and free balloons

Sale of Town Centennial shirts, and caps

Sale of the County Museum's new book:  
***The Town of Amherst: Celebrating 100 Years***

2010 ArtMeters Unveiling 11 a.m.  
at the Town MiniPark

Centennial Parade at 2 p.m.  
Featuring the ACHS band, vintage vehicles and floats, and marching units.

Bring a lawn chair and help us celebrate!

For more information see  
[www.amherstva.gov](http://www.amherstva.gov) or call Town Hall at 946-7885

## Museum Projects for You!

There are a number of ways you can help the Museum! Some are one-time projects and some ongoing projects; just take your pick! Here are just a few:

- Assistance with our Yard Sale—from pricing items ahead of time, to sales assistance on the day of the sale and many other ways!
- A handyman's project of building a wiring box out of reach of children in the children's gallery.
- Assistance with the artifact collections, from conservation and storage to exhibit preparation. Training provided.
- Data entry for research projects can often be done at home. Just ask!
- An electrician can check out some of our older lighting fixtures.
- Digital photography for some of our more fragile archival collections, or you can help with photographing some of our artifact collections!
- Lay out and design for flyers and brochures; if you'd like to learn about creating webpages, training can be provided for that, too!



### The Perfect Gift!

## The Town of Amherst: Celebrating 100 Years

Published by the Amherst County Museum and Historical Society  
Available beginning April 17, 2010



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.

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

## *At the Museum*

**Saturday, April 10** at 10 a.m. Claire Wittman portrays Daisy Williams in a visit to the Museum. Christian Carr, Director of the Sweet Briar Museum will also present. Coffee provided.

**Saturday, April 17, *Town of Amherst: Celebrating 100 Years*** goes on sale. \$18.

**Saturday, April 17** from 9:30 to 1 p.m. Town and House Tour followed by the Founders Day event at the Amherst County High School at 2 p.m. For a full day, stay in town for the Fire Department Steak Dinner at the Fire Department on Second Street.

**Saturday, April 24** from 8 to noon??? Village Garden Club's annual GardenFest.

**Saturday, May 22** at 10 a.m. Amherst Stories from the Front Porch. Cookies and lemonade..

**Saturday, June 5** from 7 a.m. to noon Amherst County Museum's Annual Yard Sale.

**Saturday, June 12** starting at 10 a.m. Centennial Street Fair. Come by for lemonade and cookies and watch the Town Centennial Parade from our front lawn.

## *Events Elsewhere*

Saturday, March 27 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. 2010 Family History conference sponsored by the Charlottesville LDS Family History Center and the central Virginia Genealogical Association. For more info see [www.charlottesville-fhc.org](http://www.charlottesville-fhc.org) or call 434.064.1715.

Saturday, March 27 marks the season's opening for the Oakland Museum near Lovingston. Weekend hours only.

Sunday, April 11 at 2 p.m. Scottsville Museum's season opening with reception and new exhibit *Where the River Bends*

Friday & Saturday, April 16 & 17 Virginia Genealogical Society a 50th Anniversary Spring Conference. Brochure available to [www.vgs.org](http://www.vgs.org)

Wednesday & Thursday, April 21 and 22, Spring Bus Tour to some Presidents' Homes, sponsored by the History Museum of western Virginia. For cost and information email [info.hswv@cox.net](mailto:info.hswv@cox.net) or call 540.342.5770.

Wednesday, April 21 at 5 p.m. Lecture at Jones Memorial Library *The Academy of Music* by Dr. James M. Elson

Executive Board:  
Leona Wilkins, President  
Mary Frances Olinger, Vice President  
Martha Cox, Treasurer  
Grady Davis  
Betty Glass  
Cynthia Hicks  
Susan Mays  
Holcomb Nixon  
Kathryn Pixley  
John Swift  
Holly Mills, Director

Address Service Requested

PO Box 741  
Amherst, VA 24521

**Amherst County Museum & Historical Society**

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
AMHERST, VA  
PERMIT NO. 24