

# The



# Muse

## Amherst County Museum & Historical Society

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(434) 946-9068

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### *From the Director*

In preparing information for the annual meeting, Board President Mr. Hamble and I gathered numbers and crunched them so that a picture of the Museum's past year could be presented to you—our membership. Mr. Hamble did a wonderful job of presenting this "picture" without all the numbers. We noticed significant growth in the use of our research library materials and visitation both onsite and website. We just keep on growing! Our Museum's volunteers continue to be one of our greatest assets. I could certainly never do this job without their help. Volunteers, We thank you!

The 2006 Historic House Tour was a rousing success, and next year's tour should be wonderful also. We are doing more and more "partnering" with other organizations—Amherst County's Jamestown Committee; the Colonial Dames; promoting Constitution Week with the DAR; planning historic plants with the Village Garden Club; Christmas Parade refreshments with the Amherst County Chamber of Commerce; learning opportunities for local students and more. We are truly an active part of goings on in Amherst County, and we've had a great year!

—Holly Mills, Director

### *Successful Annual Meeting*

Everyone who came to the meeting at Virginia Lime Works went away knowing a lot about lime mortar and beautiful plaster. After the business meeting, door prize awards and lunch, we toured the house which is designed to exhibit the different kinds of work done by the Lime Works. Jimmy Price showed many of their restorations currently in progress including Montpelier, Richmond monuments, the State Capitol, a cathedral in Maryland and others. He then gave an audio-visual presentation of their work and projects, including frequent trips to Europe to study methods, and workshops he conducts here. Many thanks to Mr. Price and his staff for beverages and door prizes as well as the gracious use of their workplace.

Thanks also to Cynthia Hicks for all her work in organizing this very successful meeting! She was assisted by Kathryn Pixley and Steve Martin.



## *Get To Know Your County Van Tour*



### *Saturday, October 28*

We'll see Poplar Grove, Brightwell's and Galt's Mills, follow the James River toward Riverville, Beulah Methodist Church, Allen's Creek, Amherst Wayside and much more! Call the Museum at 946-9068 to make your reservation. Donations will be accepted to help defray the cost of transportation.

**For more details, see page 2.**

### *What's new in the library...*

- **Smithfield Review**, volumes 1-5, 7-8; published by the Montgomery County Branch Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities in cooperation with the Department of History, VPISU, Blacksburg. These issues contain articles about the New River Valley, Roanoke & Salem and southwest Virginia generally. Subjects include Civil War, railroad development, coal mining, African American migration through Appalachia, the Mary Draper Ingles story, eighteenth century life and the region's prehistory.
- **Virginia Publick Claims, Bedford County**, compiled and transcribed by Janice L. Abercrombie and Richard Slatten. Athens, GA: Iberian Publishing Company, n.d.
- **Goff—Lands in Amherst, Bedford & Botetourt Counties of Virginia, as viewed from the Peaks of Otter**, compiled by Allen S. Goff, 2006
- **Campbell County, Virginia; Deed Book I Abstracts**, prepared by Phillip Wayne Rhodes, 1976
- **Melungeons Yesterday and Today**, by Jean Patterson Bible, Signal Mountain Press, Tennessee: 1975

### *Summer SuperMuseum 2006 Announces the Grand Prize Winner—from Amherst County!*

2006 is the first year of the SuperMuseum passport program. During the summer the Lynchburg Area Museum Professionals group designed and implemented a program to promote visitation for museums in the Lynchburg region. This year's grand prize winner received a \$250 value package of museum gifts from participating museums ranging from gift certificates, memberships and discounts. The winner, Ayumi Ritchie, received her passport at the Amherst County Museum and Historical Society, which was also the first stamp on her passport. Congratulations, Ayumi!

### *Our Holiday Plans*

We will be hosting our annual Holiday Open House on Tuesday afternoon, December 12, from 4 to 6 p.m. Be sure to join us for the festivities and refreshments!

We will also be serving hot chocolate and cookies before the Christmas Parade in Amherst on Saturday, December 2. Refreshments at 4:30, parade at 6:30.

### *Van Tour - Saturday, October 28*

Our fall tour will leave Amherst Administration Building at 9:00 a.m. We will tour Poplar Grove Golf Community, Brightwell's and Galt's Mills, and drive along the James River toward Riverville passing points of interest. Lunch will be at Beulah Methodist Church; **bring your own lunch and drink**. We will view abandoned mines and the Allen's Creek area, then travel via Route 60 E by Amherst Wayside returning to Amherst by early afternoon. Call the Museum at 946-9068 to make your reservation. Donations will be accepted to help defray the cost of transportation.

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### *What's new in our collections...*

New artifacts are often received into our collections and each new one has its own story to tell about Amherst County. Sometimes the story isn't complete, as is the case with a recently donated collection of photographs. We hope you can help us out with the rest of the story! This picture is one of the unidentified pictures in a photograph collection recently donated to the Amherst County Museum and Historical Society. The collection of photographs taken by Florence Virginia Lewis (1913-2002), was donated by her niece, Anne Lewis Leydon of Jacksonville, Florida. Florence Virginia Lewis was

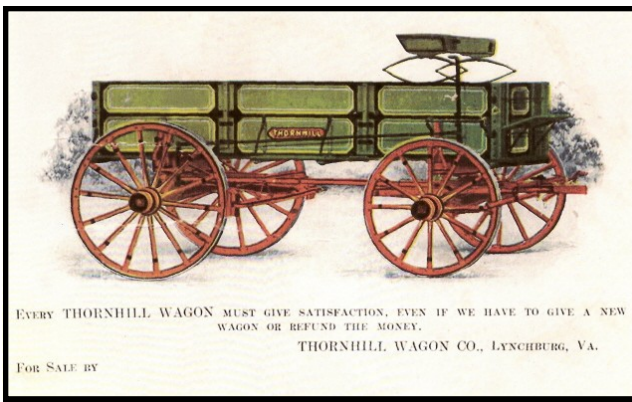
from the Pedlar Mills community and taught school before becoming a Presbyterian missionary to the Belgian Congo in the 1940s, returning to Virginia in 1973. If you can identify these young people, please call the Museum at (434)946-9068 and tell us who they are!



*You don't want to miss this as you drive by!*

### New Exhibit on the Front Porch!

You won't want to miss seeing the new exhibit on the front porch of the Amherst County Museum. The Thornhill Wagon, donated by Doris C. Johnson and her son Mark in 1996, is restored and ready for future display in the ACMHS Annex. Plans are underway for building the annex, but more funding is needed. You can help by attending fund raising events and by making donations to the Museum Annex Fund.



### The Thornhill Wagon Company

Benjamin P. Thornhill was born in Appomatox County in or near 1868. His career in Lynchburg can be charted by research in city directories. By 1892, he was employed at the Pettyjohn and Thornhill Planing Mill in Lynchburg. By 1894, he was sole proprietor.

In 1899, Thornhill left his wood planing business for employment with the Harris Buggy and Wagon Works. Another employee at the Harris facility was a young man ten years his junior named William Ward Hill.

By 1900, Benjamin P. Thornhill had his own wagon manufacturing plant in Lynchburg. He called it The Thornhill Wagon Company. William Hill was employed by Thornhill as a traveling salesman. The Thornhill name assured a quality product. Wagons made there used only the best local lumber, iron rims on their wheels were the finest made, and the paint used was advertised as pure lead. They were sent by rail all over the United States. It is said 13,000 wagons were made and sold in 1910, alone.



*At left, board president Mr. Charles Hamble (far left) and board member Mr. Holcomb Nixon (near right) consider the wagon's position as it is placed on the Museum's porch.*

The Johnson family's Thornhill Wagon was purchased from William Ward Hill's store in Amherst not long after B. Lynwood Johnson purchased 115 acres near Clifford in 1905. The story of the wagon is part of the history of the City Lynchburg and the Town of Amherst.

### Hill Hardware Corporation

By 1907, William Ward Hill was Vice President of the Thornhill Wagon Company, with retail outlets near the Community Market in Lynchburg and on Main Street in Amherst. Both ventures prospered, but with the advent of automotive transportation, Hill adjusted his primary focus to farm supplies, lumber, and hardware sales at his store in Amherst.

His new enterprise thrived until the economic depression which began in 1929 escalated during 1930. Farmers to whom he had extended credit defaulted on their loans, leaving him with a huge burden of debt to his suppliers. In a brief moment of despair, he committed suicide in January 1931.

William Ward Hill, his wife Annie Sanford Hill, and their children had many friends. His funeral was attended by a throng of mourners from Amherst and Lynchburg.

William W. Turner, Sr. purchased Hill's business after his death. The Turner family still conducts its operation in Amherst as Hill Hardware Corporation.

## *Notes from a Jamestown Kitchen*

*What follows is an abridged version of a talk prepared by former board member Ruth McBride. It was presented at a program jointly sponsored by the Amherst County Museum and the West of the Falls Chapter of the Colonial Dames XVII Century, on Saturday, July 29, at Sweet Briar's Florence Elston Inn & Conference Center.*

Our earliest years, the early 1600s, little “bits and pieces” that made up the everyday life of our early settlers who called the Jamestown Settlement home, we find intriguing.

As we look into the everyday life of those of that day and place, we find that many times it is what we consider the “unusual” which evokes our comments, remarks, observations, and even our criticism. Yet, we must take heed to one of our common everyday foods.

Charles E. Hatch, Jr., writes “English wheat brought over for the purpose was planted.” This was done very early, within a couple of weeks from the arrival of the settlers in the country. But by early fall, it was obvious that the Indian crops of corn, peas and beans that were maturing were the most promising for the food supply.

According to a talk by CiCi Williamson to the Culinary Historians of Washington DC last year, the Indians planted corn and beans together. The corn grew high and the beans grew up the stalk. Isn't this true today?

The first taste of Indian cornbread was at Kecoughtan, which is now Hampton, on April 30, 1607, where, quoting Captain John Smith “they were regaled by the Indians with corn bread, tobacco, and a dance.”

Our earliest settlers made good use of corn: the corn “pone” (or hoecake or ash cakes), has remained in favor for years, and John Fiske wrote that our first legislators who met in the church at Jamestown for the first time had their hoecakes and bacon before the meeting. They apparently felt the need for a hearty breakfast on that morning of July 30, 1619, before undertaking their legislative duties.

Of course, we all know about batter bread, that delectable concoction that we, in the South, call spoonbread.

Then, there is of course grits and hominy, plus the many uses for corn other than food: How about the corn broom, corncob pipes, corn husk dolls, laundry starch, and do you remember when it was used as a dry shampoo by brushing through the hair?

And last but certainly not least, what about the well-liked liquid produced from corn by our mountain folk that was so popular during the days of prohibition?

Today there stands a mill known by the colonists as Hardy's Mill which is known to have been standing in 1646. The name has been changed over time, but corn is still waterground there just as it was in our ancestor's day. Even though not “unusual” corn played a major part in

the survival of the little colony. As a matter of fact, the famous nutritionist, Adelle Davis, along with her husband, Frank Seiglinger, give cornmeal mush credit for making America great.

From the writings of Fiske, we find that there was discussion in earlier years as to which plant or flower of the New World should be selected as the national emblem for our country. And you may recall that it was Benjamin Franklin who wanted to make the wild turkey the national emblem.

Captain Christopher Newport on one of his return trips to London “carried home a coop of plump turkeys, which were strange to the English.” They were “the first that ever graced an English bill of fare.” So, it was the colonists who introduced the turkey to the English.

Another native food I would like to note here is the sweet potato. CiCi Williamson in her talk in DC said “although sweet potatoes were already being cultivated by Virginia Indians before the colonists arrived, the first white potatoes arrived in Jamestown in 1621 when the Governor of Bermuda, Nathaniel Butler, sent two large cedar chests containing potatoes and other vegetables to Gov. Francis Wyatt.” Perhaps you know that Thomas Jefferson had a fondness for “sweet potato pudding”: which was poured into a pastry. Might that be interpreted as today's sweet potato pie?

Is it possible to discuss food without talking about the Virginia Ham—a well-known regional specialty? Salt curing was a new experience for the colonists and the Indians taught the colonists the secret behind their method of salting, smoking and aging meats, and they adapted the Indian method to the plentiful razorback hog. Those wild boars were not native to Virginia but were transported to this country from England for hunting. They became so plentiful and such a nuisance that they were moved to an island in the river known as Hog Island.

You may have heard the story about the ham that was cured in 1902, never refrigerated and still around in 2003. It was featured in *Ripley's Believe it or Not* as the world's oldest ham. Mr. Gwaltney, the owner, had it insured for \$1,000 by Lloyd's of London.

Another food not native to this country but so much a part of our way of life is honey. The honeybee as we know it, called by the Indians “the white man's fly,” came to this country in the 1600s. Our earliest settlers stowed beehives in the hulls of their ships along with pigeons, peacocks and a variety of seeds and fruit trees. Such ordinary things were a part of the everyday lives of the earliest English settlers. Four hundred years later, how important are these things to us?

**Welcome to our new members!**

*Mr. and Mrs. John Batman, Amherst, VA*

*Mary Lynn Brown, Amherst, VA*

*Mr. & Mrs. James Callaham, Jr., Madison Heights, VA*

*Laura Lee Crews, Amherst, VA*

*Claudia Ellis, Lexington, VA*

*Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Finney, Amherst, VA*

*Gayle and Catherine George, Amherst, VA*

*Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hanson, Amherst, VA*

*Mr. and Mrs. Donald Hedrick, Madison Heights, VA*

*Carol Hendricksen, Charlottesville, VA*

*Mr. and Mrs. William Hopkins, Amherst, VA*

*Dr. and Mrs. James Hubbard, Amherst, VA*

*Loma Hurst, Trenton, MO*

*The Stephen LeBar family, Amherst, VA*

*Dr. & Mrs. William Kershner, Amherst, VA*

*Mr. and Mrs. Ed Kryspin, Amherst, VA*

*Nancy McDearmon, Amherst, VA*

*Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Mays, Amherst, VA*

*Mr. and Mrs. James E. Moss, Madison Heights, VA*

*Jean Parrot, Virginia*

*Bernetta Chambers-Pinn, Madison Heights, VA*

*The Ayumi Ritchie family, Madison Heights, VA*

*Marita Taylor, Madison Heights, VA*

*Mr. and Mrs. Bailey Wilkins, Amherst, VA*

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We are especially appreciative of the work of board members Ed Hopkins and Cynthia Hicks who have headed up the recent membership drive. New memberships are continuing to come in the mail and are being processed even as this goes to press. Be sure to let your friends and neighbors know that our county museum would welcome their support!



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	
Student	\$5.00 _____
Regular (Individual)	\$15.00 _____
Regular (Household)	\$20.00 _____
Senior 55+ (Individual)	\$10.00 _____
Senior (Household)	\$15.00 _____
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 \_\_\_\_\_

**October 2006**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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29	30	31				

**November 2006**

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26	27	28	29	30		

**December 2006**

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10	11	<b>12</b>	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**Mark These Dates!**

**Saturday, October 28**  
**Fall Van Tour**  
**Southeastern Amherst County**  
 9:00 a.m. Leaves from the  
 County Administration Building  
 See details on page 2

**Saturday, December 2**  
**Hot Chocolate and Cookies**  
**Before the Christmas Parade**  
 4:30 to 6 p.m.  
 Parade starts at 6:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, December 12**  
**Holiday Open House**  
**at the Museum**  
 4:00 to 6 p.m.

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

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**Amherst County Museum & Historical Society**

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