



MONTGOMERY MUSEUM & LEWIS MILLER REGIONAL ART CENTER

Volume 29 Issue 1

NEWSLETTER

January 2013

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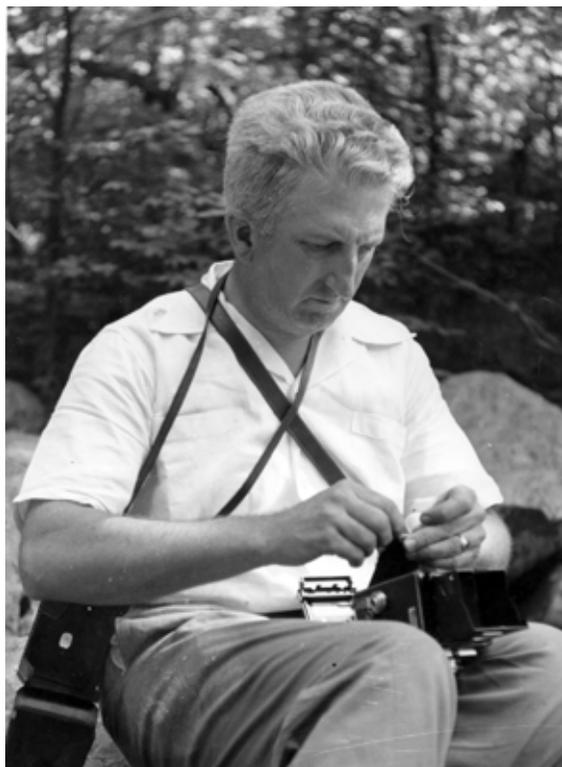


Raise the Roof Campaign Update

The Raise the Roof Campaign is a museum project to raise funds for a new roof and structural repairs. The campaign has raised over \$45,000!! This amount does not include pledges.

Abundant thanks for those very generous members and friends who have made contributions. Please consider making a donation to save our building so that we can preserve our heritage for future generations. Board members are seeking the support of local businesses to help in this very important fundraising effort.

Don't miss Robin Poteet's Watercolor Workshop (see page 2).



Photographer Frank Shelton (1909-2001)

PHOTOGRAPHY: ART AND SCIENCE

A new temporary exhibit was installed this month in the museum's library complimenting the new art photography exhibit. The exhibit explores the history of photography. A wide array of cameras and photography equipment on loan from local professional photographer Bill Poff are featured. Additionally, the exhibit showcases four well-known local photographers: W. H. Jewell, D. D. Lester, Earl Palmer, and Frank Shelton. One of Jewell's cameras is on exhibit through the courtesy of the D. D. Lester family, and Mr. Shelton's camera is on loan from his son, Bob Shelton.



Art at the Museum

ARTIST ROBIN POTEET

In March, artist Robin Poteet will come to Christiansburg to lead a 3-day watercolor workshop as a benefit for the Montgomery Museum. The workshop will be held at Christiansburg Presbyterian Church, 107 W. Main St. Dates are March 12, 14 and 15 from 9 am to 3 pm.

In her own words: "I love working in watercolor because it has a freshness and luminosity that you simply can't get from other medias, whether you're painting quick, fresh sketches, or photo-realistic scenes. Where it really differs though is in what it does on its own... it moves, blends and changes right up until the time it dries. It teaches us timing and patience, and encourages us to relinquish at least some control. It has a reputation for being difficult, but it doesn't have to be that way! Our 3-day workshop will focus on the artist as a 'partner' in the painting process rather than the controller. We'll experiment, use new tools and learn to turn mistakes into 'happy accidents'."

The three workshop days will include tips, techniques, demos, discussions and ample painting time. Students will learn how to make your backgrounds more interesting, use your brushes more creatively and how to incorporate non-traditional tools.

Robin will set up a still life one day, plus, participants may work from reference photos of their choice. Anyone with basic watercolor experience or beyond will feel comfortable in this workshop, particularly those ready for a creative "push."

Robin is a popular instructor at The Studio School in Roanoke and works as a watercolorist full time. She has been featured in several national painting magazines and in a recent book on sketching. You can view her work at robinpoteet.blogspot.com.

The price for the 3-day workshop is \$150, and early payment will reserve your place in the class. The class size is limited to 15 students.



Robin Poteet



Cezanne Muse

Robin Poteet's Workshop
Christiansburg Presbyterian Church
107 W. Main St.
March 12, 14, 15
9 am to 3 pm

Spectral Arts Concert

On May 11 at 4:00 pm, you are invited to a concert on the museum lawn by the group, Spectral Arts. Spectral Arts is a group of young musicians who combine live acoustic music (guitar and percussion) with poetry that is both spoken and sung. The music and poetry have been described as transcendental and embodying a beautiful, as well as an ethereal, visionary quality.

THE MANY LAYERS OF A DEPICTION OF AN AMERICAN MYTH

A TASTE OF WINE AND 17TH CENTURY CULTURE

The Many Layers of an American Myth
When: Thursday, January 31 at 5:30 p.m.
Where: Holiday Inn, 99 Bradley Drive
Christiansburg
Cost: \$20
Call the Museum for a reservation

Alonzo Chappel's painting "Captain John Smith Saved by Pocahontas" appears to be an aesthetically engaging depiction of a famous alleged historical event. However, upon closer examination and setting the work in a more accurate historical context, a much deeper meaning begins to emerge. This work in actuality opens the door to discuss how Americans in the mid 19th century understood the nation's past as well as how they envisioned the nation's future. All the while the work directly reflects the sectional strife that had gripped the nation and taken it into the bloodiest war the nation had ever witnessed. Join B. Scott Crawford as he explores the many layers of meaning found within this very energetic work of art and helps us to better understand how some of the themes the artist explores still resonate in American society today!

ANOTHER ART TALK WITH SCOTT CRAWFORD

A man kneels beside a World War II soldier's grave; a scene of mourning. But is this the intent of the artist? Is there something more to this work? B. Scott Crawford will unveil hidden secrets found within the painting "Pax Pacific" by Pierre Daura. What seems to be a simple commentary on the loss of war morphs into a much deeper story; Crawford has uncovered a possible secret related to the painting that brings not only a whole new meaning to the work, but also sheds a new light on the artist! This is a talk that you will not want to miss! It is planned for March 28 at 5:30 pm at the Holiday Inn. Come, enjoy a glass of wine from Vintage Cellars.

WISH LIST

In anticipation of the museum's participation in Friends of the Library Garden Tour this July, we have renovated our front flower beds and plan to add at least four rose bushes. If you would like to donate to the "Rose Fund" and have a rosebush planted in your honor or as a memorial, please let us know. We plan on purchasing the plants in May.

We would appreciate any 100% cotton fabric to be used to wrap artifacts.

Thank you to the following people who responded to our last wish list request: Steve Jacobs, O.D., Franklyn Moreno, Martin McMillion, and Mike Reilly.

KROGER CARES AT THE MUSEUM

Come get your Kroger Cares card and start earning funds for the museum. Here's how it works:

1. Purchase the card from the museum for \$5.
2. Take it to Kroger's Customer Service desk where they will load the card with any amount that you choose up to \$500.
3. Shop as you normally do and then pay with the preloaded card. Don't forget to refill the card as you use the funds on it!

Your purchases give 5% of the sales to the museum (after we reach \$5,000). It doesn't cost you anything except the groceries you purchase. This is a wonderful (and easy) way for you to help the museum receive a steady flow of income. Please contact the museum if you have questions. The cards will be at the front desk.

Thank you in advance for your support of this great project!

NEW FORMAT FOR THE NEWSLETTER

This year (2013) brings a change in our newsletter delivery. The newsletter will be mailed in January and July. It will be delivered digitally in April and October. Please help us with this new process by providing your email address so that you may receive all editions of the newsletter. Send your address to museum@montgomerymuseum.org. Also, we have started sending notices and reminders about museum happenings by email so you will want to be sure we have your address!

Early Human Webs in the NRV

B. SCOTT CRAWFORD



Imagine a somewhat Edenic landscape. Mountains push upward toward fluffy white clouds. Trees surround you, their foliage offering relief from the heat emanating from the sun. Nearby a stream's flowing water produces a sound that taps into a Jungian subconsciousness that is almost universally relaxing. As you scan across this landscape you notice that it is not in the least an untouched Utopia but rather a land that is regarded as home to a group of people. These people have worn down the wilderness to produce paths to other lands. They have brought down trees to build a small village. And through hunting practices, wildlife in the area is in no way "safe." It is the 1500s; you are standing on what is today the Blacksburg Country Club in the Ellett Valley. And you are examining an Amerindian, Eastern Woodland village.

In the mid 1960s evidence was unearthed during construction of the Blacksburg Country Club of an Amerindian village. After archeologists conducted an excavation of the site, some interesting evidence was literally unearthed to shed light on the region's history prior to European contact. When Europeans and Africans began to move into what is today Montgomery County, they found a region for the most part entirely unoccupied by native peoples; several Amerindian groups, including the Shawnee, the Cherokee, and the Iroquois Confederation, laid claim to the area. All of these groups, as well as some other smaller groups, used the region as a hunting ground and to traverse as they went to war with one another. However, as archeologists discovered, this was not always the case.

During the 1500s an Amerindian Village shaped the landscape in the Ellett Valley. This palisaded village contained approximately eleven, circular dwellings, presumably in the shape of a dome; most likely, these dwellings were wigwams. The dwellings were nestled against the palisade, and the open center was most likely used for ceremonies. However, what is most interesting is that underneath the village and in the immediate area were 100 graves. That the palisade and some of the dwellings included several graves indicates that the land had actually been used on two separate occasions by two different Indian groups: one group used the land as a burial ground while a later group, not knowing the land contained graves, established a village.

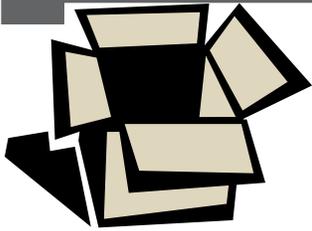
Another item of interest is that the archeologists found a host of pottery shards. These pieces of pottery represented three distinct styles: New River Series, Clarksville Series, and Radford Series. While these styles were tied to the New River Valley region, the

archeologists noted that there were distinct design influences from the Dan River area and as far away as southern Ohio. Thus the pottery suggests that a larger web of human contact existed. While extra-regional trade networks were not evident, it is possible that the group that built the village either had prisoners from other Amerindian groups from what is today southern Ohio or Southside Virginia or had moved through those areas. In either case, the Amerindians that built the village, unknowingly literally on the backs of long deceased natives, represented a human network that expanded beyond the New River Valley.

Increasingly, historians have begun to explore human history through a "web" metaphor, playing off of current characteristics of modern globalization. Arguably, what is today Montgomery County has always been directly or indirectly tied to human and economic webs and networks that expanded well beyond its current boundaries. Of course, today, the cultural and economic landscape of Montgomery County is more connected to a truly global network than any time in its history!

Just as the network to which the 16th century Indian village was tied, a host of goods are moving through the region. In order to keep goods moving, people need to participate in the economy and make purchases. Ideally, Member One would suggest that individuals should save their money and purchase items when they have enough money to do so. However, there are times when we find ourselves turning to credit in order to procure items we want or possibly need.

In these situations, I hope you will explore the credit options Member One has to offer. I think you will find that not only does Member One have extremely competitive rates, but the Member One team will exhibit a sincere desire to help you find the unique solutions to your unique financial questions. In this manner, Member One will be the One for you to function in a network that has been in existence to varying degrees since at least the time when a small band of Amerindians settled in the beautiful mountains we continue to enjoy to this day!



Inside the Box: Photographs Give a View into the Past

by Sherry Wyatt

The museum owns a large number of photographs. While many are identified, there are hundreds more of people and places whose names have been lost to time. Are these photos of any value? In most cases, the answer is “yes”! Let’s look at two of the museum’s “mystery photos” and see what we might be able to learn.

Both of these images were part of the large Craig Family Collection that came to the museum in 1988 from the estate of Miss Sherwood Flagg; the last of the Craig family to own Hans Meadow. Both images are also “carte de viste” photographs meaning that they are thin paper photographs (sepia tone) mounted on 2 1/2” x 4” cardboard. Carte de viste were very popular from the 1860s into the 1870s when they began to be supplanted by “cabinet cards” which measured 4 1/2” x 6 1/2”.

The first image is likely among the earliest photographs in the museum’s collection. The fact that it is a carte de viste and the style of the woman’s dress and hair date it to the period during or immediately after the Civil War. The dress is one piece with decorative buttons and a ribbon neck tie. The geometric ornament on the ribbon and the diamond motifs on the sleeves and skirt are related to the interest in Greek motifs at this time. The deeply-pleated skirt is held out by hoops (look closely about twelve inches above the floor). That the hoops are elliptical (fuller in the back) suggest that the photo dates to the late 1860s,



Image 1 (Craig Family Collection)



Image 2 (Craig Family Collection)

during the fashion shift to dresses with bustles and trains. Thus, this photo gives us important insight into fashion and photography in our area during a little-documented period.

The second image shows an Asian woman carrying a young girl on her back. The cardboard mat is embossed with English and Asian characters and carries a lily design on the reverse making it similar to the later cabinet cards, which often carried ornamental logos. The image is dated and is partially identified: “For Wm. Sydner². J.¹ Flagg from his friend, Kinar [?] George, June 29 ’94, age 13 mos.” The date is probably 1894; the meaning of the superscript numbers is unknown. We know the William C. Flagg, Jr. family owned and resided at Hans Meadow, but this name does not match any of those known. We also do not know who George was. The interaction of East and West during the late-nineteenth century is well-known however. For example, Christiansburg native Rev. William M. Junkin traveled to Korea as a missionary in 1892 remaining there until his death in 1908. Is this photograph related to Junkin in some way or is this yet another example of an American missionary working in Asia? It would be easy to think that the woman and child were merely posing for tourist souvenirs, but the girl’s age is given suggesting that she was part of George’s family. The child also seems to be wearing Western-style clothes. Was the woman a servant? We may never understand the story this photograph is showing, but our ideas about local communication with far-away places during the historic period are significantly expanded for having seen it.

MEADOWBROOK BRANCH

The book *Voices From Eastern Montgomery County* is now in its third printing. There presently is a waiting list for the book, and you can be added to the list by contacting the museum at (540) 268-5047 or by e-mail at berrypatch12@verizon.net.

Thomas Hale has loaned the museum a miner's lamp from his collection. Sometimes this item is called a carbide lamp. In years past, it was used by coal miners, and considered dangerous because it has an open flame. Essentially it dripped water on calcium carbide and produced acetylene gas that produced a bright yellow flame. This same process was used in the railroad stations, with a much bigger gas generator.

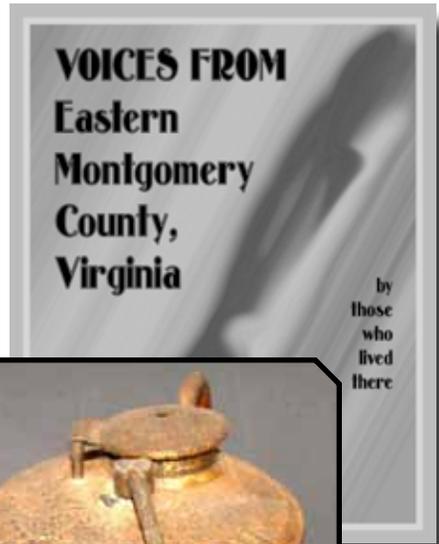
Thomas Hale loaned the museum a miner's lamp. This carbide lamp was used by coal miners. George Smith III loaned the museum a Wise Potato Chip 18 oz. can from 1952, and Helen Johnson loaned a mustache cup. Please visit the museum to view these articles from the past.



A Wise Potato Chip can is on display.



A coal miner's lamp is on display.



OUR LOOM HAS MOVED!

We'd like to extend a special thank you to Patricia Rushmore and Frits den Hertog for taking charge of moving the museum's large loom into the newly updated textile exhibit on the museum's first floor this fall.

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks go to the Blacksburg-Christiansburg Rotary Club for their generous help with moving the loom, planting and mulching the flower beds around the building, and painting the art galleries.



Frits den Hertog supports the loom and Patricia Rushmore is on the right.

Thank You for Helping the Museum's Collection Grow in 2012

| Donor | Description of Donation |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Mr. Les Akers | 1973 and 1974 National Bank of Blacksburg calendars |
| Mr. Sam Averette | 1890-1925 Map of Montgomery County |
| Ms. Mary Carroll | Season's Greetings Matchbox from First National Bank |
| Mrs. Ann Carter | Three John Dalton (of Radford) state election potholders |
| Ms. Sandra Chapin | List of Persons of Montgomery Co. who have paid all state capitation taxes, 1952-55 |
| Ms. Carolyn Furrow | Collection of Korean War era Army items from Roscoe Furrow, Sr. |
| Ms. Jean Galloway | Wampole's Preparation Card from Miller Drug; and Ruby Roberts "Virginia" poem postcard |
| Ms. Jean Galloway and Mr. Bob Poff | Watercolor drawing, Hiram Krout and pencil sketch of Miller self-portrait both by Lewis Miller |
| Mr. Marty Gordon | 1938 autograph book |
| Ms. Mary Ann Hinshelwood | Montgomery County Courthouse and Main Street, Christiansburg postcards, early 20th century |
| Mrs. Evelyn Kimball | Pipe organ pipes from Christiansburg Presbyterian Church; Ash Tray from Bank of Christiansburg; and two photos of the 1909 county courthouse by Earl Palmer |
| Mr. Henry Jablonski | Watercolor landscape by local artist Virginia Simpkins |
| Ms. Christy Mackie | Christiansburg Depot and Mountain Lake Hotel prints by Joe Olivares |
| Mrs. Sam Nixon | Spinning Wheel and Yarn Winder |
| Mr. Bob Poff | Walnut Spring Mill stationery |
| Ms. Phyllis Price | Henry Price and Price's Fork School Photos, 1910s-1920s |
| Mr. John Steele | T. W. Spindle & Bro. Store Statements, 1879 and 1882; and James Family Tax Receipt, 1881, 1889, & 1899 |
| Ms. Sue Thacker | 1935 Miss Christiansburg program |
| Ms. Darlene Wilburn | 1961 and 1972-1981 Powder Press Newsletters from Radford Arsenal and mid-20th century New Altamont Hospital postcard |

Many more donations such as books, research materials, and digital photograph scans were added to the museum's Supporting Collection for the use of our patrons.

HERITAGE DAY

Heritage Day 2013 is set for August 24, 2013. It is time to begin planning so that this year's event can be even bigger and better than before! Planning meetings will be held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 4 pm here at the museum. We need your help! **Please consider helping with this festival as there are many tasks to be accomplished and there is room for everyone!** Your input and elbow grease are both important. Please call 382-5644 for more information.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST AT APPLEBEE'S

Mark your calendars for a Pancake Breakfast sponsored by the museum on Saturday, March 16, from 8-10 am at Applebee's in Christiansburg. It is "all you can eat" pancakes, plus sausage, juice and coffee for \$7.00 (age 2 and under eat free). Come, bring friends, and support the museum in this fundraising effort.

PRESERVING HISTORY AT HOME WORKSHOPS

Objects, papers, and photographs tell a story. Only through the efforts of Montgomery County families will historic items and the county's history be preserved for future generations of citizens and researchers. The Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center is pleased to partner with Virginia Tech Special Collections to offer a basic training workshop on caring for your family heirlooms. Each student (ages 15 and up) will receive an archival box and other materials as well as a training guide. Registration is Free of Charge via a grant from the Community Foundation. The workshop will be given twice to accommodate all who are interested: first in Blacksburg on February 23, 2013, at the Newman Library and repeated at the Christiansburg Library on March 23, 2013. Each session will run from 10:00 until noon.

Call the museum at 382-5644 or email Sherry at collections@montgomerymuseum.org to register for either workshop. Space is limited!"

Old Man Coyote: My Adopted Grandfather

CHARLES PERRY FRANKS

This story starts sadly with both of my grandfathers dying at least eight years before I, Charles Perry Franks, was born in 1942. Therefore, I did not experience the joy of having the good times most young people have with their granddads. I was fortunate indeed when Mr. Ben entered the picture.

It was around 1950, when I was 8 years old, that our surrogate grandfather became part of our lives. My father ran a rural grocery store located 2 miles west of Arkabutla, Mississippi, where the nearest stoplight was located 15 miles away. There was a man named Mr. Ben Bounds, who we all lovingly called Mr. Ben. He lived about four miles from my dad's store, where all the elderly men would gather each day and gossip and play a card game they called Hickie Pitch. The group included Uncle Newel Franks, Clarence Petton, Homer Smith, Jim Bounds (brother of Mr. Ben.) Mr. Ben became our favorite because he would play with me and my sisters, Patsy Ann, Barbara Jean, and Virginia Sue. He drove a 1950 red Ford pickup which he loved dearly. Mr. Ben was about 5 foot 10 inches tall with a pot-belly. He wore Benjamin Franklin glasses, a felt-rim hat, khaki pants, and a blue long-sleeve work shirt. He would come early in the morning and stay all day. Virginia Sue was the youngest and I remember he would put her in an empty box and shake her around. He always said he was going to buy her a Cadillac car when she graduated from high school. Being in his eighties, he knew it was not likely he would live that long, so I guess it was easy to promise a Cadillac.

I remember one hot summer day he invited us to go fishing with him at Arkabutla Dam, about 6 miles from our home in the country. With permission from our dad, and after going to the barn and digging up a can of fat worms to fish with, my three sisters and I piled into the back of Mr. Ben's red truck. We got to the dam and went down, below the spillway, where the Arkabutla Lake water was rushing into the Coldwater River, forming white caps. We all had cane poles which Mr. Ben had brought along, and all threw our fishing lines in. Before long, I felt a mighty tug and I knew I had a fish, then watched my line being dragged down the river. Finally, I managed to pull in a pound-and-a-half weight crappie. Boy was I excited! I yelled "Look Mr. Ben. Look what I caught." We put the white fish on a stringer to take it home for cooking. I still remember how good it tasted.

Another time, I told Mr. Ben that our sweet potato plants had blooms. He said that they do not get blooms, and quickly bet me \$100 to that effect. I agreed to the bet and we walked to a large garden patch behind our house, where I pointed out the blooms. He never did pay me the \$100, but I had the satisfaction of being right.. sort of. Years later, I discovered that, apparently, sweet potato plants rarely flower when daylight is longer than 11 hours. Maybe being planted behind the house had something to do with it.. anyway, somehow I just got lucky in the bet.. though not lucky enough to collect the \$100.

Mr. Ben spent a great deal of time at my dad's sorghum mill. In the summer, all the local farmers who grew sorghum in their fields would bring theirs to the mill for

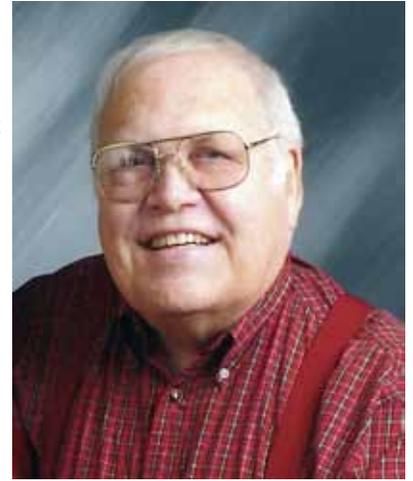
preparation. At times, we had as many as 15 different piles of various farmers' crops for processing. The iron mill used a tractor-belt-ran system that would grind the sorghum stalks and mash out the liquid, placing it into a series of four wooden barrels, and then into a long, heavy-duty, segmented tin-pan, where Jimmy Crawford, a black man, would cook it until it was molasses. My dad called it "Mississippi Hilltop Pure Sorghum Molasses" and sold it for \$2 a gallon.

One day at my dad's store, Mr. Ben was standing on the back porch, which was made of old 2 x 8 boards. We kids, being up to no good, had taken from the store the large black rubber bands used to pack smoke sausage in boxes for shipment. We would use the big heavy bands to shoot Coke caps, obtained from my dad's drink box. Well, standing at about 100 feet away, Mr. Ben was an ideal, and unsuspecting, target. I drew back my rubber band, loaded with a metal Coke cap, and let it fly. Mr. Ben was hit right below the belt with enough force to make him flinch. To this day, I can still picture it. Later on that day, I bragged of shooting Old Man Coyote.

Mr. Ben wasn't known as Old Man Coyote to everyone. Let me explain.. living in the country, the bookmobile would come by once a month, and I would check out books by Thornton W. Burgess, a conservationist and author of children's stories. Each book was about animals, and they all had names: Danny Meadow, Mouse, Peter Rabbit, Hooty the Owl, Blackie the Crow, Sammy Blue Jay, and yes, Old Man Coyote. My sister Barbara Jean, who was a year younger than myself, and I had taken it upon ourselves to give a storybook name to all the old men who visited our store. There was my Uncle Newel (he had one leg, having lost the other when, as a young man, a runaway wagon had run over him.) He became Hooty the Owl, while Mr. John Peyton was Peter Rabbit, and Mr. Ben was named Old Man Coyote.

There came a sad day when we heard that Mr. Ben had suffered a heart attack and was in the Baptist Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. About two weeks later, we saw Mr. Ben for the last time when he visited my father's store. He complained about his hands being swollen, but he was still our Mr. Ben, still my Old Man Coyote. About a week later, we heard Mr. Ben had passed away. We were all very sad and wanted to go to his funeral. I still remember sitting in the back of C.O. Pate Chapel, along with my three sisters, and tears running down my cheeks. How I would miss Mr. Ben.

We still think of those times with Mr. Ben: the hot summers outside and winter days inside, standing by the gas heater with him. It's been over 60 years of great memories of my adopted granddaddy, Old Man Coyote!



The Constitution Oak: Leaves of History in Christiansburg

by Sherry Wyatt

The large old oak standing beside the Confederate War Memorial in Christiansburg's town square looks its age with foliage that seems to be sparser each spring. Perhaps many citizens driving down Main Street or Franklin Street do not know the importance and rich history of this old tree.

The pin oak was one of forty-five saplings from Canada that were given as gifts to delegates of the 1901-1902 Constitutional Convention in Richmond. The tree symbolized the end of military rule that had come with the Reconstruction era and was planted by Confederate Veterans. Although the exact date of planting is not known, Arthur O. Sullivan, Montgomery County Treasurer and a wounded Confederate veteran, was responsible for planting the oak on the square. Sullivan and Robert Trigg Mosby cared for the tree during its early life. By 1959, it was one of only twenty-six original trees still alive.

The Virginia Constitution of 1902

An affirmation of racial attitudes held across the South, the 1902 constitution set out for the first time the "Jim Crow laws" dividing white from non-white in schools and in almost every other aspect. Another critical feature in the constitution was to disenfranchise non-white voters. To do this without violating the Fifteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, Virginia's delegates set the following qualifications: to vote a man must be able to read or be able to understand the constitution or he must pay property taxes of at least \$333 or if he (or his father) were veterans of the Civil War (serving either side). Additionally, age, residency, literacy, requirements as well as a poll tax of \$1.50 were implemented to further narrow the voter pool. These measures cut the Virginia electorate in half. The poll tax and the literacy requirement remained law into the 1960s. Rather than risk ratification by voters who were about to be disenfranchised, the Convention declared it law on July 10, 1902.

While the history of the 1901-1902 Constitutional Convention holds a legacy of racism, there were several reforms of lasting societal value including workmen's compensation, regulation of the railroads, and the State Corporation Commission to address issues of industrialization that helped foster economic stability. The Constitution of 1902 was in effect until it was replaced in 1971.

Thomas L. Moore –

Montgomery County Constitutional Delegate

One hundred delegates met in Richmond in June 1901 to begin a debate that continued for over a year before producing the new constitution. Thomas L. Moore was the delegate for Montgomery County and Radford to the Constitutional Convention. Moore was a native of Floyd County, but he had established his law firm in Christiansburg by 1892. He served as Montgomery County's commonwealth attorney from 1895-1899 and was U. S. attorney for the southwest Virginia district from 1902-1905. Items owned by Thomas L. Moore are currently on display in the "A Public Place: the History of the Montgomery County Courthouse" exhibit at the Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center in Christiansburg. Among these is The Manual of the Constitutional Con-



The Constitution Oak appears as a young sapling near the lower right corner of this c.1905 photograph. The tree is inside the iron fenced encircling the 1883 Confederate War Memorial. The old Bank of Christiansburg building is in the background. (D.D. Lester Collection)

vention of Virginia, 1901 that likely belonged to Moore. This small red book served as the rule and information book for the convention outlining the names of the delegates, committee assignments, the convention rules of order, and the constitution as it stood in 1901.

Saved and In Need of Saving

Plans to widen Main Street in 1960 nearly destroyed the Constitution Oak, but a group of ladies rallied. The group collected 900 petition signatures to save the tree and Eliza Crush (Mrs. Charles Crush) spoke to the Board of Supervisors urging them to preserve what she called "this symbol of our common heritage." The tree was preserved, but today age, the stress of being surrounded by hot pavement, and the soil compaction caused by decades of construction projects have taken their toll. That the Constitution Oak is no longer healthy is obvious. Whether the tree can be aided is a question for arborists. Concerned about the waning of the oak, Montgomery Museum Board Member Jim Page began last year a regime of collecting and planting acorns from the oak in an effort to raise seedlings and reproduce the tree. Though none have yet to take root, the project illustrates the mission of the museum: to preserve and present Montgomery County history. The tree itself has become entwined with our human history marking people and events in our past that are worth remembering.

Sources:

<http://www.vahistorical.org/onthisday/21601.htm>

http://encyclopediavirginia.org/Constitutional_Convention_Virginia_1901-1902



MONTGOMERY MUSEUM

& LEWIS MILLER REGIONAL ART CENTER

300 S. Pepper Street Christiansburg, VA 24073
540.382.5644 www.montgomerymuseum.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit #141
Christiansburg, VA
24073

Museum Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10:30-4:30

Branch at Meadowbrook (Shawsville) open Wed. & Sat., 10-12:00am

Executive Director: Sue Farrar

Calendar of Events

- Jan. 31 Art Talk/Wine tasting, Scott Crawford
5:30 pm at the Holiday Inn
- Feb. 7 Opening reception for photographers
Jon Beard, Kirk Carter, & Curt Warwick
5-7 pm at the museum
- Feb. 23 Workshop, "Preserving History at Home"
10-12 am in Blacksburg
- Mar. 12, 14, 15 - Watercolor class with Robin Poteet
9 am - 3 pm, C'burg Presbyterian Church
- Mar. 23 Workshop, "Preserving History at Home"
in Christiansburg
- Mar. 28 Art Talk/ Wine Tasting, Scott Crawford
5:30 pm at the Holiday Inn
- April 4 Opening reception for CHS art exhibit
5-7 pm at Christiansburg High School
- May 11 Spectral Arts concert on the lawn, 4 pm

Address Service Requested

Your memberships and donations make it possible for the museum to continue to collect, preserve, interpret and exhibit Montgomery County history and to encourage and showcase regional art and artists. Your generosity will be appreciated. The museum needs your support. The Museum is a non-profit 501(c)3 tax exempt organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by tax regulations.

Join the Museum and/or Make a Donation

Name _____ Spouse or company _____

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Individual Membership \$30 _____ Family Membership \$40 _____

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Are you be interested in Volunteer Opportunities? _____

