



MONTGOMERY MUSEUM & LEWIS MILLER REGIONAL ART CENTER

Volume 27 Issue 3

NEWSLETTER

October 2011

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BARNES-SURFACE MOTOR COMPANY AND VIRGINIA INN

by Bob Poff



*The Barnes-Surface Building and Hotel in the early 1920s
(photo courtesy of Billy Miller)*

In 1911, Sidney Sheltman contracted with Morris Miller to construct a two story building for an automobile dealership at 4 W. Main Street in Christiansburg. The Barnes-Surface Motor Company sold and serviced Ford cars and tractors at this location on the town square. In the mid 1910s, an adjacent two story building was constructed for a hotel. A third story had been added to both buildings by the early 1920s.

The motor company building served as home to local Ford dealerships until it was sold to Rod, Ted, Bentley and Ford Lucas in 1944. The Lucas family opened and operated Farm Supply Center which sold and serviced International Harvester trucks and McCormick Farmall tractors. The ramps that were used to drive the cars and tractors to the second and third floors are still in place. In 1962, Bill and Barbara Aldridge purchased the building and opened a furniture store. Over the next 40 years, the furniture business was operated as Fashion House Furniture, The Furniture Market, and Willoughby's.

The hotel operated under the names of Virginia Inn, Gilbert's Virginia Inn, and Hotel Virginian until the late 1960s when the building was also purchased by Bill and

Barbara Aldridge. They then expanded the furniture store into the hotel space. Several of the second and third floor hotel rooms still have the original doors, mirrors, sinks, door numbers, etc.

Today, the first floors of both buildings are occupied by Antiques on Main. The buildings were purchased from the Aldridge family in late 2010 by Bob and Annette Poff. Renovation work this summer included removing the paint from the brick, restoring the windows, and replacing the awnings. Interior renovations will depend on whether suitable tenants are found for the upper floors of the building.

The history of the buildings will be discussed at the October History Chat and early photographs shown. If you have reminisces of either building, please come prepared to share them. The "chat" will be on the second floor of the building, followed by a tour of the third floor of the motor company building and of some of the hotel rooms. Please enter at the yellow awning on S. Franklin Street and walk up the ramp.

Meadowbrook Branch News

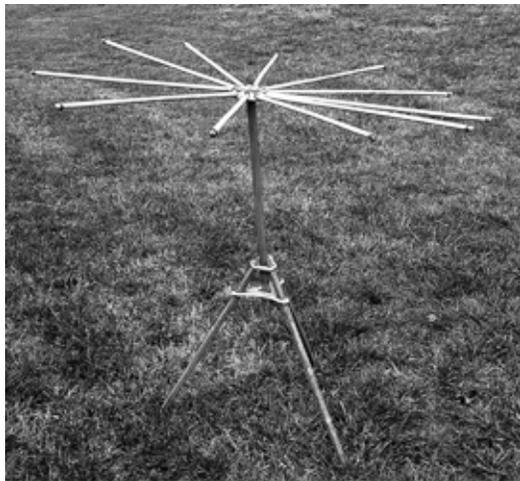
by Fran & Don Poole



Lt. Col. Pearl Tyler Ellis



A World War II traveling trunk used by Pearl Ellis



A fold down drying rack used during World War II (Courtesy of Frances Hurt)

The museum, with the help of 85 authors, continues to work on the local history book, *Voices from Eastern Montgomery County*. We still need to do some more interviews before putting the final part of the book together. We definitely see the end of the road and are doing a page by page inspection and last minute additions and revisions. We have a great working crew of technical advisors, proofreaders, and many interested persons helping with this project.

A very special addition to our collection of artifacts was brought in by Dave Angle and Diane Relf. They brought the traveling trunk of Lt. Col. Pearl Tyler Ellis who served as a US Army nurse during World Wars I and II in France and the South Pacific. While serving in the Philippines, she was the nurse to the mother of General Douglas McArthur. She was the daughter of Mrs. Pearl Tyler and Major William Mumford Ellis, great granddaughter of President John Tyler and the aunt of Madison Marye. We also have the fold down drying rack of Frances Hurt who served as a Wave in the US Navy in World War II and had to hand wash her clothes.

The museum sold prints by Eric Fitzpatrick and other artists at the Tomato Festival, and they are now available for sale at the museum. Shawsville High School Class reunion pictures taken this spring are also available.

We wish to thank all the people who contacted the museum regarding Kirk Hollow. Meadowbrook Museum is open 10 am to noon Wednesdays and Saturdays. Contact us at 268-5047 or berrypatch12@verizon.net.



The Tiger Den of the Cub Scouts, Pack 720, of Eastern Montgomery County visited the museum on September 12th.

DAY TRIPPERS

After a delightful trip to the Greenbrier to see the bunker, the Day Trippers are now off to Abingdon to tour Heartwood and the William King Museum. Heartwood, constructed with native Virginia woods, houses work of artisans in the Southwest part of the state. You will experience many interactive screens, view beautiful work of fine artisans and shop for something special. Lunch will be on your own at Heartwood (there is a wide variety of great items). This is "must see" for everyone. We will also tour the William King Museum to view several interesting art exhibits including "From These Hills" which features work of artists from Southwest Virginia.

MEMBER ART EXHIBIT

Among our membership are many talented artists. We encourage you to step forward and plan to exhibit some of your work in our Member Art Exhibit. This exhibit is a treasured tradition at the museum, and we ask your help in staging the show which will run from November 3 through December. The Opening Reception will be November 3 from 5-7 pm here at the museum. All are welcome.



October 22 at 10 am

A treat is in store for those who come to the old Barnes-Surface Building (now Antiques on Main) when Bob Poff, new owner of the building, will conduct a history chat and tour. There is no heat in the building, so dress appropriately.



December 10 at 10 am

What do you remember about Christmas from the past? What treasures do you still have to stir those memories? Bring stories and special things to share at the December History Chat. We will meet on December 10 at 10 am and enjoy refreshments and fond memories.

BIG DAY AT RUBY TUESDAY

Help the museum by dining at Ruby Tuesday!!! On Wednesday, October 12, the museum will receive 20% of the proceeds for the day. Here is your opportunity to support the museum while enjoying a great meal. This is part of the restaurant's Community Giveback Program, and we are the fortunate recipients. Please make your plans now.

ART CLASSES

As our commitment to the "Minds Wide Open" statewide project whose focus is on children in the arts, the museum in conjunction with the Blacksburg Regional Art Association is offering a series of monthly art classes for students in the 4th grade and up. The instructors are local artists who are giving their time for this project. The art will be on exhibit here at the museum and at the Community Arts Information Office in Blacksburg from March through June, 2012. Please share this information with friends and call the museum office for more information.

Lest We Forget, War is Hell: 1861 – 1865

The Civil War in Montgomery County

by Sherry Wyatt

Exhibit Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War
September 30, 2011, through June 2012

The new exhibit at the Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center will illustrate Montgomery County's role in the war at home and on the battlefield. The county's position in the tense decade leading up to the conflict and the war's aftermath will also be examined. A variety of historic objects and images will tell this important story. Objects on display will include a Cavalry sabre made in Christiansburg by Crush & Wade and other armaments, a soldier's coat and uniform buttons, period illustrations and original papers.

Montgomery County's Civil War experience illustrates the importance of transportation and war material in what many consider to be the first "modern" war. Montgomery County was located near several important production sites. Virginia was the Confederate State's largest producer of nitre (saltpeter), lead, and coal, as well as the second largest producer of iron. The limestone belt of southwest Virginia held a concentration of nitre caves. The lead mines at Austinville (Wythe County) was the only significant lead operation in the South. Saltville (also in Wythe County) was one

of only three major salt works in operation during the Civil War. Although not a primary producer, the active coal mines at Brush Mountain produced an extremely pure coal that was valuable to the war effort.

Most important, however, was the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad which ran through Christiansburg (Cambria Depot) and Central Depot (Radford). President Abraham Lincoln called this railroad "the gut of the Confederacy", and it was a primary target for Union strategists. The following letter, printed in the *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Series 1, Vol. 37, Part 1) tells us about one of the most important troop movements through Montgomery County in the words of the Union commanders.

The Museum thanks the following individuals who loaned items for the Civil War exhibit: Wayne Elliott, Ramsey McNeil, Larry Linkous, Bob Poff, and David Robbins. Also, the Museum is grateful to Joel S. Williams Financial for sponsoring the exhibit.

May 15, 1864.

Brigadier General GEORGE CROOK,
Commanding Kanawha Expedition:
GENERAL:

I have the honor to report that I left Charleston on the 1st with the cavalry brigades of General Duffie and Colonel Schoonmaker, and proceeded southward up the tributaries of the Guyandotte and the Big Sandy and along the crests of the mountains toward the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. On my arrival in Tazewell County on the 7th, I found the commands of Generals W. E. Jones and John Morgan, 5,000 strong, near the salt-works, and from prisoners, among whom was Morgan's private secretary, learned that they were well aware of our intentions. To prevent the forces near the railroad from re-enforcing the enemy you were to encounter, I attacked and drove some Kentucky troops fifteen miles toward their main body, capturing 50 prisoners and losing but 1 man. Left the enemy's front on the night of the 9th and arrived near Wytheville on the evening of the 10th, where I found about 4,000 rebels, under Sam. Jones, * on their way to oppose you. I fought them four hours, inflicting some loss

and capturing a few prisoners. My loss was 120 killed and wounded, none missing. Enemy retired after dark, and I marched to join you at Dublin. Finding you had crossed the New River eastward, I followed you on the morning of the 12th, ahead of the commands of Jones and Morgan, which arrived next day. Receiving instructions from you at Blacksburg, I destroyed the railroad to a point four miles east of Christiansburg, driving a small force of the enemy from that town, capturing two 3-inch guns, which the enemy abandoned in their haste. My operator communicated with Salem and Lynchburg and learned that large re-enforcements were moving over railroad westward. I therefore deemed it proper to join you.

Respectfully, &c.,
WM. W. AVERELL,
Brigadier-General.

Source: <http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/sources/recordView.cfm?Content=070/0461>

FROM AN 18TH CENTURY ATLANTIC WORLD ECONOMY TO ONLINE BANKING

The Member One Keeping Pace with the Vision of the Founding Fathers of the New River Valley



by B. Scott Crawford

Director/VP of Professional Development, Member One Federal Credit Union

Something fascinating has occurred over the past 20 years. In that short span of time, as Thomas Friedman has observed in his often quoted work *The World is Flat*, individuals are now competing with one another at a global level for jobs in an unprecedented manner. The Internet has created an environment where individuals living in one part of the world can actually “work” at a company in another part of the world . . . virtually! Globalization truly has “flattened” the world.

However, is globalization new? Is it something that has fully developed only with making the Internet public? Well, while the world has most definitely changed in the past 20 years, a quick examination of the New River Valley’s economy during the mid to late 18th century clearly shows globalization is nothing new. As the Virginia frontier was beginning to take form in the 1740s with the arrival of Europeans in the “Upper” Valley, those individuals made a distinct and clear effort to remain tied to the eastern part of Virginia and to larger markets spanning across the Atlantic World.

With the formation of western Virginia counties one of the first things county justices did was focus on developing an infrastructure that would allow the region to be tied economically to larger markets. For example, between 1774, with the formation of the short-lived Fincastle County, and 1790, county justices granted 25 ordinary, or tavern, licenses. Ordinaries on the frontier were very important to economic development as they extended credit to settlers and as they afforded eastern merchants and peddlers a place to stay as they traveled through the region selling their goods. Five of the twenty-five licenses were granted on the first two days the justices met in 1774 as Fincastle County was born, suggesting the justices viewed these institutions as quite important.

Similarly, justices focused heavily on naming overseers to build roads and on granting licenses for individuals to operate ferries, both important for the development of the economic infrastructure of the frontier. When Fincastle justices first met, they named five overseers of roads. As Montgomery County forged itself out of Fincastle County in 1776, justices began to name operators of ferries to help move people and goods across the many rivers in the region. By the summer of 1779, at least four operators were overseeing ferries that helped individuals cross major rivers, including the New River.

Inventories from the New River Valley and the surrounding region indicate that households along the frontier were in no way isolated, independent homesteads as is so often perpetuated in myths about the American frontier. Out of 172 inventories from the region taken between 1770 and 1790 only 20% of the households had a loom, only 34% had a spinning wheel, and only 9% had shears for shearing sheep. Most interesting is that only 2% of the household inventories had both shears and sheep listed, and only 21% of the inventories listed both spinning wheels and sheep. Thus, very few households could take wool from the sheep and take it through the complete process to turn it into a functional textile. Households were dependent on one another to complete the textile manufacturing process, and households were dependent on imports from regions well beyond the New River Valley.

Tracing the movement of goods indicates the region was strongly tied to an Atlantic World economy. Lead, hemp, flax, furs, skins, and cattle from the New River Valley found their way to eastern Virginia, other colonial ports, the West Indies, and Europe. While goods moved east, merchants and peddlers were sending manufactured goods to settlers in the region. A distinct economic web took shape between 1740 and 1775 that clearly allowed the New River Valley to find a niche in a much larger Atlantic World economy. The region, ultimately, was tied to a global economic web.

Member One Federal Credit Union recognizes this strong tradition of emersion into a larger world economy. The Founding Fathers of the New River Valley clearly saw the region as ripe for development; they in no way wanted the region to be isolated. They immediately developed the region’s infrastructure and established strong ties to eastern merchants.

Similarly, Member One has made great strides to develop its place in the relatively new infrastructure that more firmly unites individuals around the globe: the Internet. Member One has recently fully launched an online financial platform that allows its members to interact with their accounts literally anywhere on the planet. Members can pay bills, transfer funds, even do their taxes all online. It is a wonderful reflection of how Member One provides financial freedom and convenience to its members, is aligned with the financial realities of the 21st century, and is in step with those that first settled the New River Valley over 250 years ago as they tried to insure that the region was united with a larger world economy.

Everyone Should Collect Something

by Charles Franks

When I was a young lad around 12 years of age, living in rural, northern Mississippi, my collection began. It was a hot summer morning, and I was working in my father's general country store, where my sisters and I worked half day shifts doing various chores including cleaning, filling drink boxes, drawing (pumping) gas, and waiting on customers. A black man named 'Shag BoBo', a regular, good customer, came into the store that day and showed me an 1837 "large" cent-piece. As a curious young boy, I was fascinated by the large shiny coin and had to have it. I reached deep into my old blue jeans and dragged out four months of hard savings and offered Shag three dollars for his penny. He was happy with the price - I suspected he had found the coin in a field where he was chopping cotton for a mere four dollars a day - and I was happy with my purchase, the start of a lifelong collection of "large cents."

Many years later, on a bright and sunny Saturday afternoon, my wife and I were at a country auction in Floyd County, Virginia. There was a frosted pressed-glass pouring pitcher with five glasses, that we both liked and purchased for ten dollars. When we got to our car, my wife dropped and broke one of the glasses, but I quickly said "We only need a set of four anyway." Thus, we had started a collection.

Our upper kitchen cabinets were spaced far enough from the ceiling to offer a perfect display area between the cabinet top and ceiling, and there we placed the pitcher. From that day on, any time we were traveling we were looking for another pitcher for our collection. Thirty years later, we now have twenty-two of them and each piece, including one that was a gift from the head librarian at the high school my two sons attended, and another obtained from an antique shop while on vacation in Nashville, Tennessee, has a different story and holds a particular place in our lives. There's still room on top of those cabinets for two or three more, and their stories.

In 1978, my wife read an article in a popular magazine about someone collecting pigs, so she put the word out that she was going to start collecting pigs. Of course, I knew there wouldn't be "live" ones (Right, NO live ones?!?!) but I suspect our boys were a little disappointed about that.

From that day on, all of her family and friends gave her.. Pigs! To this day, I can pick out the first pig we purchased in an antique store in Cookeville, Tennessee, for one dollar. She currently has over 2,000 different sizes, types, and colors of pigs, but now only seeks that unusual, that special one, that she doesn't already have.

As our children were growing up, my older son took an interest in bottles. Each year, we would visit one of the largest flea markets, located in Hillsville, Virginia, where over 100,000 people shop each year. I can remember looking for all kinds of medicine, pop, and unusual bottles. A memorable find was a rare brown 7 Up bottle, which my son still has to this day. He also has a large display-cabinet in his bathroom with an assortment of 50 small medicine bottles and other drug store-related items. My younger son collected comic books, so he and his mother each went in a different direction at the show, hoping to add to his collection. His Star Wars collection is now hard to find.

The point I'm making is that my wife, my children, and I have had many happy moments in our lifetimes from searching for our treasures, culminating with the joy of "the find," when it occurs. Anyone can start searching for something that appeals to them, and can build a lifetime memory-bank of vivid stories that can be shared with others having a similar interest.

Everyone should collect something, whether from another time, or just another place, because it's those "somethings" that connect us all to our heritage, other eras and other cultures, good times and bad. It's all reflected in antiques and collectibles. That "something," after you discover what it is, can be one of the most entertaining and enjoyable parts of your journey through this life.

DO YOU HAVE A COLLECTION?

Do you have a collection you would like to share? The museum has a special exhibit case in the reception room which is dedicated to collections of members and friends. Currently on display are Boy Scout items loaned by Bob Shelton, Bill Miller and Joe Simmons. If you have a collection to share, please call the museum office.

An Historic Document Recently Found in the Courthouse

The official *Register of Colored Persons of Montgomery County, State of Virginia*, recording people cohabiting together as husband and wife, was recently discovered in the records department of the Montgomery County Courthouse.

With this document, marriages between former slaves were legally recognized for the first time. The register is the county's first legal record of the marriages and children of former slaves. Cohabitation registers were created at the direction of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands -- known as the Freedmen's Bureau. It was one of the first steps in giving blacks the basic rights of citizenship, including the right to be married.

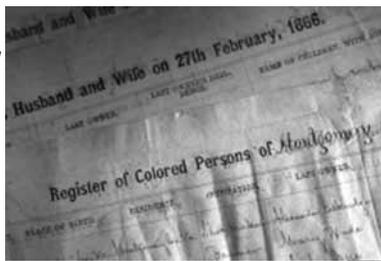
Circuit Court Clerk Erica Williams found the document earlier this year in the basement of the Montgomery County Courthouse. She said, "This is so important for history. It brings all this home to Montgomery County." Williams found the register in March while cleaning up and organizing documents to prepare to move into the new courthouse.

The register lists each man's name, his occupation, his wife's name, where each was from, the names of any children and the names of their former owners. It also lists the date each couple began living together as husband and wife.

"It's a gold mine for a variety of sources for me as a historian" and also as a genealogist, said Dan Thorp, an associate professor of history at Virginia Tech. He said it is one of the earliest documents that link blacks with slave owners.

Wayne Muhammad, a spokesman for the Christiansburg Institute, was very excited about the find. He is working to promote and preserve the historical school's place in African American education. When he heard about the register, he said, "I was jumping up and down, so happy to have this. Oftentimes without documents like this, it's hard to connect the dots."

The Library of Virginia made digitally-reproduced, high-resolution copies of the register. It



Circuit Court Clerk Erica Williams found the historic document.

restored the Montgomery County document, carefully removing tape that had been used to hold it together, de-acidifying the paper, and mending it with Japanese tissue paper. A video was made detailing the restoration process.

The original has been retired and is now stored in the courthouse in an acid-free box, away from light and the damaging oils on human hands.

Source:

The Roanoke Times, June 12, 2011

Erica Williams will address the Montgomery Museum Board of Directors at their next meeting on November 3, 2011, to discuss this subject.

**Virginia Mountain
Pest Control**

BRAD WOOLWINE
COMPLETE TERMITE & PEST CONTROL

382-2973 Christiansburg
980-1450 Pulaski
745-2973 Floyd

PO Box 2136 Christiansburg, VA 24073

INDEPENDENT



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

Address Service Requested

Calendar of Events

- Oct. 12 Ruby Tuesday Community Giveback Program; it benefits the museum
- Oct. 15 Art class for grade 4 and up
9 am - 1 pm at the museum
- Oct. 22 History Chat at Barnes-Surface Bldg.
10 am
- Nov. 3 Opening reception for member art exhibit, 5-7 pm
- Nov. 12 Art class for grade 4 and up
9 am - 1 pm at the museum
- Nov. 16 Bus trip to Abingdon to visit Heartwood and Wm. King Art Museum 8:30 am - 6
- Dec. 2 Wine tasting and art talk with Scott Crawford, 5:30 pm at new Holiday Inn
- Dec. 10 History Chat at museum, 10 am
Bring Christmas memories

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.

Please be generous. 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 _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zipcode _____

Phone 1. _____ 2. _____ e-mail _____

Individual Membership \$20 _____ Family Membership \$30 _____

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Are you be interested in Volunteer Opportunities? _____

Are you interested in volunteering?

