



Montgomery Museum & Lewis Miller Regional Art Center

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In this Issue:

	Page
Mary Elizabeth Lindon	1
President Emma Jackson	2
Growing Up In Montg. Co.	2
Museum Outreach Program	2
Meadowbrook News	3
Mark Your Calendar	3
Sponsors & Annual Fund	3
Crab Creek Communities	4
New Board Members	5
President's Message	6

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARY ELIZABETH LINDON

EDITOR OF VIRGINIA'S MONTGOMERY COUNTY



Mary Elizabeth Lindon

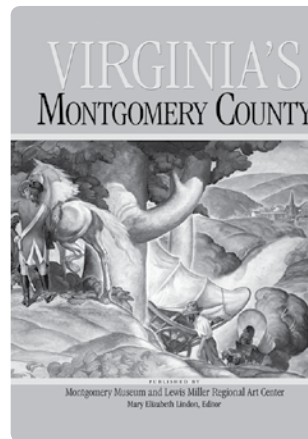
When asked to give an account of her life, Mary Elizabeth Lindon wrote the following, which both sums up her genealogy and gives us a hint of her sharp wit, "As I have been reminded numerous times by the purists, I am not a native of Montgomery County. My father missed it by one year when his parents moved from Graysontown, in Montgomery, just across the river to Snowville, in Pulaski County, where he was born (but I do go back to Henry Patton, an early settler). However, my mother was born in Montgomery County. I was born in Roanoke City, but I have spent every summer on my grandparents' farm, outside of Blacksburg town, until we eventually moved to Blacksburg in 1945."

Mrs. Lindon graduated from Blacksburg High School in 1948 and went on to attend VPI. A member of the class of 1952, she majored in architecture and general science. She later attended Radford College, earning her B. S. in Secondary Education with majors in English, history, and science. She was qualified to teach seven subjects. Her love of learning has continued throughout her life. She has taken additional courses at the National University of Ireland, Cork College and closer to home at Hollins University, Radford University, and Virginia Tech.

In 1956, she joined the Navy, went to Officer Candidate School in Newport, R. I. and became a WAVE officer. She was the first officer in the WAVE (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) program from Montgomery County. She worked in Naval Communications in the Pentagon during the Cold War, and was selected for promotion to Lieutenant, Senior Grade, before her retirement from the Navy in 1960.

In 1961-1962, Mrs. Lindon taught science at Pulaski High School. In 1962, she began her tenure at Christiansburg High School teaching science, but the following year joined the English department, where she taught until 1973.

Mrs. Lindon and her late husband Luke Lindon purchased a farm in 1964 where they raised several breeds of dogs, double-registered Tennessee Walking/Racking Horses, and registered Miniature Horses, as well as various breeds of chickens and other birds. Regarding her family,



Mrs. Lindon reports that they had "no children (by birth!); lots of 'hand-picked!'"

Mrs. Lindon's active life has included service as Show Secretary for the Virginia Racking Horse Association as well as Show Secretary for a number of horse shows. She was a 4-H leader from 1976 until 2002 and produced and directed the Annual Awards Program for twenty years. In 1988, she was chosen as an honorary 4-H All Star.

Her love of history included the part-ownership of an antiques shop from 1988 until 2004. She has also participated in Dr. Bud Robertson's series of Civil War study-travel seminars for about 15 years. She includes the six voyages she's made on the Mississippi River by steamboat among her favorite travels.

Mrs. Lindon's devotion to offering educational opportunities for students of history has extended to her service as editor for *Virginia's Montgomery County* from 2004 until 2009. This monumental work significantly benefited from her sharp eye, extensive knowledge, and ready red pen. She also authored a chapter on the county during Civil War bringing a wealth of information to the undertaking. Her commitment to the book project did not falter during her rehabilitation from hip surgery. She continued her work from her rehab room!

Mary Elizabeth Lindon's first reaction to our request for an interview was met with her usual gusto: "I have absolutely no regrets about my life," she said, "I'd do it all over again."

INTRODUCING NEW MUSEUM BOARD PRESIDENT

EMMA JACKSON



Emma Jackson

In 1998, our family moved from Henry County, Virginia, to Montgomery County. Throughout many years, as a wife, working mother, and now proud grandmother of three, my foremost constant activity has been as a community volunteer.

Starting at the age of 13 as a sandwich maker and canteen cleaner for Red Cross blood drives, my best friend's mother was in charge, and she took advantage of a young girl's help. Many, many community organizations later, I am still at it.

My family expected me to give back to my community. I have come to know about people and their situations, some wonderful and some desperate, by being a volunteer.

By joining the Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Art Center, I was given a wonderful opportunity to find a place to meet and make new friends in my new home and do what I love doing - VOLUNTEERING. Are you looking for a place to serve?

History Exhibit . . . **GROWING UP IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

Thoughts of childhood may bring about waves of nostalgia, and the new exhibit at the Montgomery Museum & Lewis Miller Regional Art Center has plenty of historic toys to help foster those warm memories. Yet, the way that children have grown up in the past is vastly different from today, and this exhibit explores a number of those differences by looking at the lives of children at school, performing chores, and at play. Objects and photographs from the nineteenth century through the 1950s will educate and will also bring a smile. The exhibit will run from December 2009 through May 2010.

Upcoming Opportunities:

Workshops for children are being planned for early next year in conjunction with the exhibit.



Boy and Grandfather, c.1920
D. D. Lester Collection

MUSEUM OUTREACH PROGRAM

In conjunction with the history exhibit "Growing Up in Montgomery County," the Montgomery Museum is proud to announce the opening of the Museum Outreach Program created by James Page, Ph.D. Dr. Page has worked for 36 years collecting the array of unusual and interesting artifacts presented in this hands-on traveling exhibit. Page has refined his collection and presentation to bring students complete information on many colonial household and trade artifacts through the interactive Process of Inquiring. Jim Page provides training for anyone who wishes to introduce this program to students in Montgomery County. The learning process is in accordance with SOL based activities and gives students from grade four and up the opportunity to process information and to problem-solve. It is the hope of the museum that Montgomery County students will benefit from this creative learning process.

Meadowbrook Branch News

Fran & Don Poole

The 2009 Fall Church Tour, sponsored by Montgomery County Parks & Recreations and the Meadowbrook Museum, was very successful and was enjoyed by all who took part. We hope you saw the tour pictures in the *New River Valley Current*. The four churches visited this year were so very gracious and informative to all of us – the churches were White Memorial United Methodist Church, Big Spring Baptist Church, Hall’s United Methodist Church, and Shawsville Congregational Holiness Church. Lunch was at the Meadowbrook Cafe.

A school bus carried the students of Mrs. Patricia Thompson, and some parents, on “An Historic Tour of Eastern Montgomery County” and visited or viewed interesting and historic parts of our area. The group had a picnic lunch at Alta Mons. All participants seemed to enjoy the outing.



The log exposure shows the sanctuary of Hall’s United Methodist Church is a log structure.



Rev. Kenneth Gray is giving a recital at the Big Spring Baptist Church, Elliston, VA.

2009 ANNUAL FUND

We gratefully acknowledge the 2009 Annual Fund gifts and thank the following for their continued support of the museum during our recent request:

Lindsay West, Doris Oliver, Harriet & Pete Peters, Glenn Newell, Jim & Pauletta Copenhaver, Peggy Chafin, Judy & Joe Flickinger, Robert Phillips, Mary Ann Hinshelwood, James Earp, Dr. & Mrs. G. R. Smith, Jr., JoAnn Underwood, Carl & Ramsey McNeil, J. Howe Brown, Jean Galloway, Paul Distler, and Sue Farrar.

Corporate Sponsors

With gratitude and appreciation the Board of Directors, staff and membership of the Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center wish to thank the following for their dedicated support during 2009:

Amelia’s Pizzeria; Asset Solutions Corp.; Auburn Hills Golf Course; Christiansburg Parks and Recreation; Christiansburg Police Department; Coldwell Banker Townside Realtors; College of Business/Alumni Relations, VT; Cracker Barrel Old Country Store; Dean Trimble, Sound; DeliMart, Wades & Citgo; Diane’s Hair Center; Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore, L.L.P.; Hair Force of Virginia, Inc.; Hale’s Restaurant; Horne Funeral Services; Innovations Salon; Invision; Joni Pienkowski; Kroger; Lanier Endodontic Group; Master Gardeners; Mill Mountain Coffee & Tea; Montgomery County Department of Parks and Recreation; Montgomery Sanitation; Our Daily Bread; Persian Rug Gallery; Retired and Senior Volunteer Services; Shelor Motor Mile; Simmons, Wilson & Neel, Inc.; Smithson’s/Sherman’s; StellarOne; Stone

Mark Your Calendar

March	Christiansburg High School - Students Art Exhibit
5	Meet the Artists Reception 5-7:00
April	Blacksburg High School - Students Art Exhibit
2	Reception for BHS Student Artists 5-7:00
17	History Chat: 10-12:00
May 7	The Beyer Print of Christiansburg Opening reception for Marie Collier & Backyard Stonecarvers
May-June	Art exhibit by Marie Collier and Backyard Stonecarvers
TBA	New History Exhibit: Patriotism: Those Who Serve
Museum Board of Directors will meet on Feb. 11, Mar. 11, Apr. 8, and May 13.	

& Kellerman, PC; The School of Visual Arts, College of Architecture and Urban Studies, Virginia Tech; Traveling Treasures; Vintage Cellar; WalMart; and Warm Hearth Village.

Crab Creek Communities: Belmont, Vicker, and Walton

by April Martin Danner

PART 2

(Part 1 was published in the last newsletter.)

The Crab Creek area experienced two separate Federal invasions during the Civil War. The first happened after the battles of Cloyd's Mountain and the New River Bridge in May 1864. During the withdrawal of Union troops, a demolition party was ordered up the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. The official report of Union Lieutenant J.D. Hines, 12th Ohio Infantry, stated that his men moved into Walton and destroyed several bridges, a water tank, pump, and between 500 to 1,000 cords of wood. He also recorded that they pushed the locomotive, *Henry Davis*, off a bridge near Plum Creek and destroyed a stationary engine used as a sawmill. The second invasion into the Crab Creek environ occurred in the last occupation of the New River Valley in April 1865. During the raid, Union General George Stoneman sent out Brown's brigade to destroy all railroad culverts, trestles, and bridges along Crab Creek. At some point during either of these raids or one of the many other scares, members of the community hid their valuables. It was recorded that the Hornbargers buried their gold coins because the "Yankees came to the area, they were looting people's home." Horses were also hidden from both the Union and Confederate forces.

Reconstruction brought peace to the Crab Creek community, and the area of Belmont was officially given credence. Vicker Switch also became a named section. In 1875, the first building to reference Belmont was established and was the Belmont School. Several other schools dotted the neighborhood in the following years, including the Hawley and Chrisman Schools. The Hawley School operated well into the 1900's. It was referred to as both the Red and White School depending on the paint color and time frame. In 1953, Belview School took over the educational needs in the Belmont community.

Churches in the area also took on the Belmont prefix. The first was the Belmont Union Church which allowed all denominations to share the building. The Church would later be renamed Belmont Christian Church.

Belmont never recorded any lasting businesses other than Chrisman Mill. The Giles General Store survived for a few years at the intersection of Chrisman Mill and Pepper's Ferry roads but failed within a decade. Some small enterprises, such as Belle

Hinkle's washerwomen services, and ice harvesting were, however, mentioned by local residents. During prohibition years, the locals also used bootlegging to supplement their income. Most residents made a living farming, or working either on the railroad or at the Merrimac mines. The Radford Army Ammunition Plant was built near Walton in 1940 and would become the largest employer for both Belmont and the New River Valley.

Vicker Switch and Walton developed as small communities in their own right after the establishment of the railroad. The Virginia and Tennessee Railroad was built along the banks of Crab Creek in 1854. Many residents along the tracks worked in the construction and operation of the line. As noted earlier, Walton had a pump station and water tank. It also had the first coal wharf.

Vicker Switch, however, became the predominant rail stop on Crab Creek, after Cambria. A depot was built once the railroad was bought by the Norfolk and Western corporation, and a community soon grew around the station. In an 1888 directory, several businesses were operating in the Vicars [sic] community. There was a Post Office, a distillery owned by L.C. Simpkins, and a General Store owned by John M Linkous. The community was also large enough to warrant a Justice of the Peace, and Hannibal Harmon served in that capacity.

Crab Creek and the communities of Belmont, Vicker Switch, and Walton all have a rich and fertile past. Their history evolved and diverted over time just as the creek bed gradually flowed in different directions to weave its path to the river. The communities along the banks also ebbed and flowed on the currents of American history. Today, reminders of those course changes still stand witness to the history of the Crab Creek Communities. The mill pond of Chrisman's can still be seen in the grassy meadows near where it once helped feed the area. Smallmouth bass hide under parts of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad culverts destroyed by the Union Army in 1865. On the hills and bluffs along the valley, gravestones stand as silent links to the pioneers, soldiers, farmers, teachers, and preachers who built the beloved communities along the tranquil Crab Creek.

Source information is available from the author

New Museum Board Members

NANCY MILLER

Nancy Woolwine Miller was born and raised in the Cambria section of Christiansburg. She attended local public schools, and then attended James Madison College and Radford College. Nancy was employed with the Montgomery County Commissioner of Revenue office for 35 years, and she served as the Montgomery County Commissioner of the Revenue for eight years. Nancy married Bill Miller, and they have three children, nine grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. Her hobbies are reading, needlework, and gardening.



Nancy Miller

KIM HARICH

Kim Harich was born and raised in St. Albans, WV, where he attended parochial schools. He studied chemistry at Virginia Tech, and then worked as an analytical biochemist on the staff of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Kim specializes in mass spectrometry. His interest in old houses and antiques led him to volunteer work at the Montgomery Museum.



Kim Harich

APRIL MARTIN DANNER

April Martin Danner is a proud local, born and raised in Christiansburg. She graduated from Christiansburg High School, and received an Associate's Degree from New River Community College in 1992, a Bachelor's Degree in History from Virginia Tech in 1994, and a Master's Degree in History in 2002, also from Virginia Tech. She has worked in the community for many years, first at Western Sizzlin Steakhouse for 12 years and then at Texas Steakhouse as the General Manager for the past 10 years. She is a founding member of the Gatekeepers: The Montgomery County Cemetery Project, chairperson for the Montgomery County Sesqui-centennial Committee, a charter member of the Captain Milton Hall Harmon Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, a member of the Allegheny Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Burke's Garden Chapter of the National Daughters of the War of 1812. She married Frederick Danner from Dublin, VA, and they make their home in Christiansburg along with their two dogs. She is the daughter of William and Juanita Martin from the Crab Creek area of the county. She has several published articles, short stories, and professional works. Future plans involve returning to school in pursuit of a PhD and continuing work in the preservation and celebration of Montgomery County's history.



April Danner



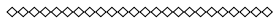
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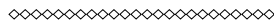
Museum Hours
Tuesday - Saturday
10:30 - 4:30

Branch Museums



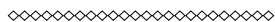
Meadowbrook Branch
267 Alleghany Spring Road
Shawsville

Wednesday & Saturday
2:00 - 4:00



Riner Branch
Log Cabin at
Auburn High School
Riner

Open by appointment



Montgomery Museum and
Lewis Miller Regional Art
Center is a 501(c)3 tax exempt
organization. Contributions
are tax deductible to the extent
allowed by law.

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Message from the President

Dear Members and Friends,

As you read the first of the four newsletters you will receive this year, I hope you will reflect on the many programs your museum provided to our families and community supporters in 2009.

A refrain that is heard many times is, "I have lived in Montgomery county for thirty years and have never been to the museum". By being a member, I sincerely hope you will spread the word to your friends, neighbors, employees and extended family. We are here, open and suitable for families with children. On a monthly basis something new and interesting is put on display, whether it be history or art related.

Your Board of Directors provides many hours of effort so that all of Montgomery County will have a first rate place of pride for the many artifacts, family histories, photographs, books and documents in our collections.

We are always delighted to hear your words of praise, however, if you have concerns or criticism about how your museum is operating, please do not hesitate to contact me or any of my fellow board members. We need to know how our programs are being received.

In 2010, we hope to see each and every one of you at "Your" museum and art center.

Sincerely,
Emma S. Jackson
President