

Uncovering Forgotten Treasures

by Sherry Joines Wyatt

The recent construction of the “Patriotism in Conflict and Peace” exhibit offered me an opportunity to work with artifacts in the museum’s collection that have not been exhibited for many years – if ever. As I brought these forgotten treasures out of storage, the story of Montgomery County’s patriotic citizens became very real. A scrapbook created by Miss Robertine Hughes in 1943 is especially poignant. World War II raged during her final year at Christiansburg High School. The graduation invitations, prom cards, and other memorabilia are those of a typical teenager, but the American Flag cover decoration and notes inside from friends who knew her “heart was with the Marines” suggest more to the story. Tucked at the back of the book, letters and telegrams from the summer of 1943 reveal that Hughes wed Marine W. D. Jordan shortly after graduation. Jordan’s original orders were enclosed in the scrapbook as were newspaper clippings illustrating his service in the Pacific; all of these are on display in the exhibit. Robertine Hughes Jordan went on to serve as Montgomery County Commissioner of Revenue for forty-three years.

The realities of war are further illustrated by The New-World Loose-leaf Atlas published by Sears, Roebuck, and Company in 1919. The book includes pages of statistics about American involvement in the war and a map of Europe shows the realignment of borders after 1918 treaties. A changing world called for up-to-date information.



*World War I Soldiers Convalesce
(from Martin Photograph Album)*

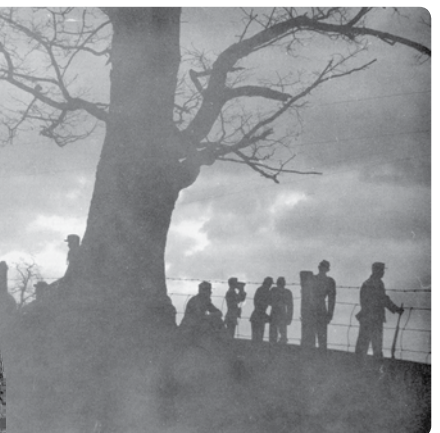
The artifacts in the museum’s collection do not always have as much detail as we would wish. A photograph album containing images from about 1914 through 1920 (donated by Mrs. Lottie Martin) is on exhibit. The album has a wealth of photos of World War I soldiers, encampments, and even an image of soldiers convalescing at a hospital (enlarged and displayed with c. 1915 wicker wheelchair). Who were these men and what was their experience? The photos enrich our understanding of the experience of war and patriotism, but we still have so many questions.

SEVEN MILE TREE

Several county residents have initiated a Seven Mile Tree Project to commemorate the Seven Mile Tree Civil War Battle which was fought on April 12, 1865, just three days after the surrender at Appomattox. The site of the battle was approximately seven miles from Christiansburg on the Mudpike Road. The Seven Mile Tree was still standing in 1958 when Photographer Doug Lester witnessed a battle reenactment.

The original tree no longer stands, and on June 4, 2010, local historians planted a White Oak tree as a memorial to the battle.

Future plans include placing a tree marker and establishing the site on the official Civil War Trail. Those currently involved with the project are Billy and Mary Peterman, Bob Styne, Greg Miller, Bob and Susan Miller, Jim Politis, Sam Lucas, and Bob Shelton. If you have any documentation that would help with this project, please contact a member of the committee.



A Civil War battle reenactment at Seven Mile Tree in April 1958 (photo by Doug Lester)

Billy Peterman stands beside the Seven Mile Memorial Tree planted this year.

PATRIOTISM IN CONFLICT AND PEACE

This new exhibit explores the various aspects of patriotism and its expression by Montgomery County residents through history. Rarely exhibited artifacts such as a 1779 William Preston land warrant, illustrate the Revolutionary period and the beginning of patriotism for a new country. Military service and the home front are explored during periods of conflict such as World War I, World War II, and Vietnam. Uniforms and military gear are exhibited beside ration booklets, personal letters, and other memorabilia. The construction of the Radford Army Ammunitions Plant in 1940, was important during World War II and had significant impact on our area. Recently acquired building models and photographs from the arsenal showcase the plant's history. Patriotism during peace time is shown with a look at the history of our local VFW and American Legion. The exhibit will run through mid-November 2010.



*A Family of World War I Soldiers
(D. D. Lester Collection)*

Sculptor at the Museum

LOU GREINER

Lou Greiner grew up surrounded by paints, canvases and most importantly, creativity. A native of Roanoke County, she has always been involved with students...as a science teacher, a preschool director and as a conductor of many workshops. Her real passion now is creating miniature life-like sculptures with polymer clay. Using nature as her focus and drawing from her science background, Lou creates beautiful floral sculptures, complete with insect life! Her work will be on exhibit at the museum during November and December. The opening reception is November 5 from 5-7 pm.



Lou Greiner



Hawaiian Bouquet by Lou Greiner



HISTORY CHAT

September 18, 2010

Join us at 10:00 am for light breakfast foods and an interesting chat about early medical practices in Montgomery County. Bob Shelton and Jamie Graybeal will lead us in a discussion on this interesting subject. Jamie's husband was a physician in the 1950's, and Bob's father was a Christiansburg pharmacist.

New Artist at the Museum

ABOUT THE ARTIST . . .

Robert E. Tuckwiller is one of today's most prolific and successful American Artists. Born in Ronceverte, Greenbrier County, West Virginia, Tuckwiller grew up on a farm just west of Lewisburg. As a young boy, Tuckwiller exhibited an interest and skill in drawing and painting, and when he was 9 years old, his parents enrolled him in his first formal art class. He continued to develop his artistic talents throughout his formative years, and, in 1976, he obtained a B. S. degree in art from Concord University. Acclaimed as a realist, Tuckwiller's artwork depicts the quiet beauty of the pastoral countryside and the natural environment. For over 30 years, Tuckwiller has painted and sold several thousand original paintings, and he has released 109 signed and numbered limited edition prints, 62 of which are sold out and available only on the secondary market. Tuckwiller's award-winning artwork can be found in more than 26,000 private and corporate collections throughout the U.S. and abroad. He is particularly known for his true-to-life rendering of mountains and valleys, rivers and streams, and other aspects of our bucolic surroundings, and making them so real that people have mistaken his paintings for photographs.

For more than twenty years, Robert has operated the Tuckwiller Art Gallery in his hometown of Lewisburg, West Virginia, and the Tuckwiller Art Studio is located in Newport, Virginia.

Tuckwiller was recently commissioned to paint a mural at the new Carilion hospital built in Pearisburg, Virginia. The mural, which depicts a realistic landscape of scenes and landmarks from throughout the region, was painted on the wall of the hospital lobby. It is 8 feet tall and 75 feet long. Tuckwiller spent more than 200 hours



Tuckwiller paints at an art show in Harpers Ferry



Robert Tuckwiller and his painting The Journey

painting the mural, and it was unveiled during the dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony this spring.

His work will be on exhibit from August 30 to September 24th. The opening reception will be September 3 from 5-7 pm.

Museum Garden Memorial

The family of Pauline Lawrence of Christiansburg has placed a plaque in her memory in our garden because as a neighbor she enjoyed the garden. A generous monetary donation from the family has been gratefully accepted and will be used to enhance the garden. The museum is very grateful for this thoughtful gift.



Museum Annual Meeting

Mark your calendar for October 3 at 2:00 pm. Our Annual Meeting will be held in the Community Room of the Christiansburg Library with Dr. James Robertson as our guest speaker. Dr. Robertson is an Alumni Distinguished Professor (one of eight in the history of VA Tech) and Director of the VA Center for Civil War. He will talk about "The Many Faces of the Civil War." Please plan to attend and enjoy light refreshments, elect officers and board members and meet Dr. Robertson.

